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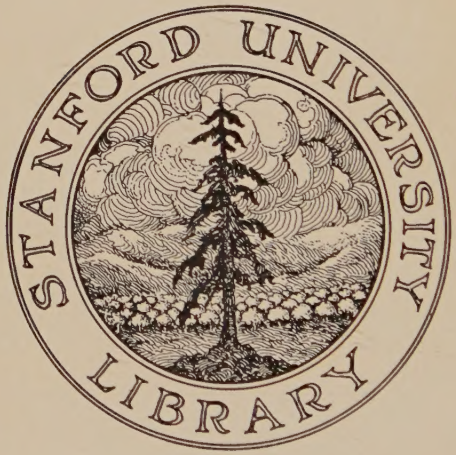
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# The Teachings of Jesus Concerning Wealth

The University of Chicago
FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

# THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING WEALTH

## REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF HIS ENVIRONMENT AND COMPARED WITH HIS CONTEMPORARIES

PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL, IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE AND INTERPRETATION)

BY
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# PREFACE

This little volume is part of a thesis submitted to the Divinity Faculty of the University of Chicago in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. As originally submitted, it contained also a study of the teachings of the apostles and the early fathers. The omission of this from the present publication is due to the author's desire to study it more thoroughly. On the basis of investigations already made, however, he feels justified in saying that the interpretation of the teaching of Jesus by the earlier fathers is in substantial accord with that set forth in this treatise. Certainly not until the latter part of the third century do divergent interpretations appear.

The thesis is offered to the public in the belief that there is still room and need for a further exposition of the subject of which it treats. The problems of property are very perplexing, and their solution is vital to national welfare. Any help in it that might be had from Jesus, the Christian world should eagerly receive.

Thus far the attitude of Jesus to property has not to any great extent received the attention of specialists in English-speaking countries. The discussions of the subject by Professor F. G. Peabody, in his book "Jesus Christ and the Social Question,"

by Professor Shailer Mathews, in his "Social Teaching of Jesus," and by Dr. E. T. Root, in his work, "The Profit of the Many," are all very helpful, but are rather brief. The very able work by Dr. Christian Rogge, "Der irdische Besitz im Neuen Testament," the more popular discussion of the subject by Dr. Abraham Kuyper in his monograph, "De Christus en de Sociale Nooden," and the recent publication by Professor O. Holtzman, "Jesus Christus und das Gemeinschaft Leben der Menschen," are not generally accessible to English readers.

The treatise is almost wholly based upon original sources of information. This explains the scarcity of its references to the modern authorities. A rearrangement of its material since its acceptance as a thesis has been made in order to make it more readable. Instead of retaining the historic it has been given a topical form.

The author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Christian Rogge, whose work, especially where it touches on questions of criticism, is as sagacious as it is original. He also wishes to express his obligation to Professors E. D. Burton and Shailer Mathews, whose suggestions and criticisms he found invaluable.

That the discussion in the treatise may cast some light upon the subject in hand, and that its deficiencies and errors may stimulate others to write more masterfully on it, is the sincere hope of the author.

# INTRODUCTION

Unto what is the kingdom of God like? It is "not eating and drinking." It does not consist in externalities. It is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is inwardness, not outwardness. It is like unto leaven hid in a great measure of meal. But the kingdom must come to visibility, just as the leaven does. If the leaven stay hid in the meal, it is not leaven. If the kingdom do not come to outwardness, it has no inwardness. "In the world, yet not of the world"—this is the perpetual fact of the kingdom of heaven; not conforming to the world, but transforming it—this is the kingdom's law of operation.

Now, to help keep these balances and to help obey this law, it must be an immeasurable advantage to get "back to Christ" in this historic sense, that we view Christ as He actually lived among men day by day; that we get Him before the mind in the precise setting of His time; that we see just what conditions—social, ceremonial, civic, and personal—He daily faced, and how He met those conditions.

Was He a theorist, exploiting views so far away from the realities or possibilities of life, that He was utterly unpractical and impracticable? Was He a

socialist, so radical in His social and economic views as to threaten the disruption of the family and of society? Was He a revolutionist, bent on the overthrow of established government, and the destruction of the states? Or did He utterly ignore social conditions, in His supreme purpose to establish a kingdom? Did He have nothing whatever to say as to the disposition to be made of wealth? Did He lay down specific rules of conduct in connection with civic, monetary, and social matters? Or did He enunciate broad, fundamental principles for guidance not only in spiritual concerns, but in things pertaining to society and civil government? In fine, did Christ teach anything concerning social, economic, and property questions that can be used, and that should be used, to make God's kingdom come now and here, in the midst of the business and the pleasure of this work-a-day world, as well as hereafter in the glories and activities of the life of heaven?

The following pages are an attempted answer to these questions so far as they apply to the possession, accumulation, and use of riches. They set forth "the teachings of Jesus concerning wealth." They are far and away the most intensely realistic presentation of the subject within my knowledge; for, combined with an evident familiarity with the sources, and a quite, thorough study of the field, and a judicial poise in treating of controverted points

of exegesis, and of significant "variations between the Gospels," there is a rare simplicity and lucidity of style, that lets the reader see the realities of Palestinian conditions, the failure of the Jewish Church to improve the people's social state, the Humanitarianism of a Righteous Remnant in the days of Jesus, and Christ's walk and talk with men, very much as if he were an eye-witness to the scenes and events described, and a hearer of the very words of the divine teacher.

The reader is likely to rise from the reading of these pages, convinced of three things, viz.: that "Jesus was tremendously interested in people's economic conditions"; that "He sought to better people's material conditions by making the people themselves better"; and that He "planned to make men better through the agency of the Church." It will thus be seen that though Jesus "thought in ages," He thought also for the man of His time; that though He exalted the individual He glorified society; that though His kingdom is "not of this world," it is the most real thing this world holds; that though He claimed absolute priority in, and lordship over, every affection of heart and home, He gave to home and love and marriage their sweetest amenities and sanctities; and that though the only true riches are the riches of God, worldly wealth can be put to great uses in helping God's kingdom come.

HERRICK JOHNSON.

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# THE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF PALESTINE IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil, olives, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." (Deut. viii. 7, 8.)

# CHAPTER I

## THE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF PALESTINE IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

Palestine is a most peculiar country. Roughly speaking, it consists of four strips of territory running parallel to each other from north to south. Each strip has its own peculiar features, climate, and produce. Two of them are high and two of them low, and the low and the high alternate.

The western strip, which runs along the Mediterranean Sea, is low. Save for the promontory of Carmel, which cuts across it in the north, its surface is uniform, being everywhere level or gently rolling. The ground is naturally rich and capable of raising the finest of wheat.

The next parallel section is the highland strip. It is the most important strip in Palestine. It contains more places of historic interest than all the other strips combined. Within its area lie Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Samaria, Shiloh, Shechem, Sychar, Cana, and Nazareth.

The northern part is very rough and densely timbered, but scattered through it are fertile plains, which when attended to yield excellent harvests. Going south one strikes the beautiful plain of

Esdraelon. Esdraelon is the best plain in Palestine, and is famous alike for its fertility and for having been the battle-ground of so many different people. "Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Emirs and Arsacids, Judges and Consuls, have all contended for the mastery of that smiling tract." Farther south the ground gradually rises, and the plains grow smaller. All are rich, however, and when cultivated yield good crops of wheat. The hillsides are well adapted for grape culture and all sorts of orchards, and the ridges make good pasturage for cattle and sheep.

Still farther south the ground grows more hilly, but is still fertile, and capable of producing the best grapes in the world. It was from this part of the land that the spies sent out by Moses cut the branch with the cluster of grapes which they bore upon a staff between two. (Numbers 13, 23.)

In the extreme south and to the southeast of this strip the ground is very desolate. It abounds in savage cliffs and naked ravines, and has neither trees, streams, nor fountains.

The third parallel strip is the enormous chasm through which the Jordan—the descender—tumbles. From its source in the waters of Merom to its terminus in the Dead Sea, a straight distance of one hundred and thirty-six miles, it falls three thousand feet. The Lake of Galilee, through which it passes, lies seven hundred feet below the Mediterranean Sea, and the Dead Sea, into which it empties, thirteen

hundred feet. The valley is not of much importance. Its average width is only eight miles, and because of its excessive heat the people who live in it are indolent. No great man—prophet or warrior—ever came from the Jordan Valley. Jericho was its largest city, but though Jesus must have passed through this city several times, he did not work in it. Having little time for gathering a nucleus for his kingdom, he preferred to give all his time to the hardier people from the hills.

The fourth strip is the eastern table-land, a plateau which lies some three thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is made up of wooded hills and grassy plains, excellently adapted for grazing, is well watered, and will produce all kinds of fruit.

The different altitudes of the strips produce a great variety of climate. A traveler passing in a direct line from east to west through Jerusalem and Jericho would pass through all kinds of climate. On the low coast the temperature is high. Palms are growing there, and he would likely want to shade himself from the rays of the sun beneath their leafy tops. On the Judean hills the climate is temperate, the nights are always cool, and refreshing winds blow generally during the day. If he traveled in the winter he might run into snow, as snow is known to have fallen there to a depth of five feet and remained on the ground for several days. He might even see the shimmering ice, as the pools around

Jerusalem have been covered with it. Going into the Jordan Valley he would enter a region of continuous hot weather, while on the plateau beyond it is always cold. All this variety of climate can be found in a journey of scarcely seventy miles.

This great variety of climate occasions a variety of products. Dr. Post, of Beirut, has said that no other country in the world yields so large a number of food products. All the cereals and leguminous plants commonly used for food, whether native or imported, will grow and yield good harvests.

Early records of the land speak of its great fertility. In several places in the Old Testament it is called a "good land" (Ex. iii. 8, Deut. i. 25, vi. 18), "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. xiii. 5, Ex. xxxiii. 3), "a fat land" (Nehemiah, ix. 25), "a land of brooks of water, fountains, and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vine and figs, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olives, and honey; a land where people can eat bread without scarceness and lack for nothing." (Deut. viii. 7, 8.)

Records of Jesus' day also tell of great fertility. If we divide the land west of the Jordan into three equal parts, and draw the lines from west to east, and call the third to the north Galilee, the central third Samaria, and the southern third Judea, and divide that on the east side of Jordan into two parts, running the lines in the same direction, and then call

the southern half Perea, our designations would approximately cover the divisions of the lands that go by these names.

Of Galilee Josephus says that it was very rich. It was full of plantations of trees of all sorts, and every part of the soil was carefully tilled. (Jos. Wars, 3, 3, 2.) In some parts of the land, presumably in Galilee, judging from a parable of Jesus, the produce of the grain-fields was sometimes a hundred-fold. (Matt. xiii. 23.)

Samaria was nearly as rich. All the land was good, and capable when cultivated of producing a fine crop of wheat. The hillsides were fit for vine culture, orchards of all kinds abounded, and the ridges were good for pasturing small cattle and sheep.

Perea had some desert land, and much that was rough and hard to work, but was well watered, and produced all kinds of fruit. (Jos. Wars, 3, 3, 3.)

Judea, too, was fertile. Trees were abundant, water was plenty, grasses were good, and the cities were full of people. (Jos. Wars, 3, 3, 4.) Especially fruitful was the part of Judea around Jericho. (Jos. Wars, 1, 6, 6.) The balsam of that region and the beautiful palm-trees that grew there were reckoned to be the most important products of Palestine, and its dates were the best in the world. (Tacitus, Historia, 5, 6; Pliny, Historia, Naturalis, 13, 4, 44.)

Even those parts of Judea where nature had done least were productive. The forbidding-looking steppes supported many goats and sheep. Small cattle and sheep grazed on the ridges of the ragged hills, while the sunny side of their rocky slopes had in several instances been covered with soil and made to bear choice grapes.

The population of Palestine was very dense. With an area of only eleven thousand square miles it contained five million people. The densest part was lower Galilee, especially that portion of it that lay around its lake. Josephus declares that there were two hundred and four villages (or townships), the smallest of which had a population of over fifteen thousand people. (Jos. Wars, 3, 3, 2.) Galilee was the home of Jesus. There he spent the greater part of his wonderful childhood and youth (John iv. 44; Matt. ii. 23), and the greater part of his public ministry. There, too, he found the greater number of his disciples. (Acts i. 11, ii. 7.)

The whole country was carefully cultivated. Where one sees now bare and desolate hills, there were in Jesus' time fruitful fields and blossoming orchards; where there are now broken pillars and crumbling walls, the ruin of ancient homes, there were then smiling cottages and thriving cities and towns. One might almost say that agriculture was a passion with the Hebrews. There never was a

people that loved it more. The greatest men delighted in it. Gideon, Samson, Saul, David, Elijah, Uzziah—all great men—had been engaged in it, and by their example had given it dignity and protection.[1]

The most famous rabbis were glad to hold the plow.[2] Some would take their students to the field and work with them at heavy labor (Sabbath, 54), and none have said more beautiful words in praise of agriculture than they.[3] "If there was a king who ruled from one end of the world to another and occupied himself with agriculture, he would have done something, if not, he would have done nothing." (Jebamoth, 63a.)

Commerce was fairly active. The prophets and wise men of old had been opposed to it, as they feared that it would corrupt the people. The rabbis, too, disliked it. They also feared its seductive influence.[4]

But love of gain is stronger than fear of sin. Besides, Palestine had a most excellent location for

[1] Gen. xxvi. 12; Ex. xxii. 4-6; Lev. xix. 19, xxvi. 5; Deut. xxviii.; Prov. xii. 11, xviii. 19, xxxi. 16; 1 Kings iv. 25; 2 Kings xviii. 31; Isaiah iii. 14, xxxvi. 16, lxii. 8, 9; Micah iv. 4.

[2] Among those to whom husbandry was especially dear were Rabbi Ishmael (Berachoth, 35), Rabbi Eliezer Ben Azaria (Sabbath, 54), Rabbi Gamliel, and Rabbi Simon of Mispa. (Pea, 2.)

[3] "One only knows what comfort is when he lives on the produce of his own estate." (B. Mesiah, 107a.)

[4] "He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hands, he liveth to oppress." (Hosea xii. 7.) "A merchant shall hardly keep himself from doing wrong; and a huckster shall not be freed from sin." (Eccles. xxvi. 29.) "Diminish trade." (Aboth, 4.) "Religion is promoted by making traffic little." (Aboth, 6.) "While the dust is yet on your feet, sell your purchases." (Pesachim, 113.) "Let one make no profits in Palestine with the objects needed for the support of life." (B. Bathra, 91.)

commerce. Situated at the junction of three continents, and crossed by roads which formed about the only connection between Asia and Africa, its commercial development was inevitable. Commerce had also had the help of the country's ablest rulers. Simon the Maccabee and Herod the Great both built harbors, Simon the harbor of Joppa (1 Macc. xiv. 5), and Herod the harbor of Cæsarea. Of this harbor Josephus says that it was larger than the Pyreum at Athens. "To protect vessels against the impetuous south winds, vast stones, of above fifty feet in length and not less than eighteen feet in breadth and nine in depth, were let down in twenty fathoms of water, and a safe and beautiful harbor was constructed where nature had done nothing." (Ant. 15, 9, 6; Jos. Wars, 1, 21, 5.)

What constituted the bulk of the trade we have no means of knowing. Dye-works, glass-furnaces, potteries, and fisheries were in the cities, but to what extent such wares were exported we cannot tell. From Acts XII. 20 we learn that there was an export of food products. Schurer mentions several articles that were sold at Jerusalem some time after our period. He mentions Median beer, Edomite vinegar, Babylonian sauce, Cicilian groats, Bithynian cheese, Greek pumpkins, Spanish kolios, Persian nuts, Pelusian and Indian linen and cotton fabrics, Laodicean sandals, Egyptian ladders, baskets, and rope, Tyrian ladders, Sidonian dishes, Roman arm-

chairs, and Corinthian candlesticks. (Schurer 2, 2, 142-145.) It is not likely that trade was more active then than in Jesus' time. Commerce received undoubtedly great help from the thousands of pilgrims who went up to Jerusalem to the feasts. These pilgrims brought in many new commercial ideas. They also brought push, enterprise, and ambition, as they were generally wide-awake, progressive, intelligent men, whose influence upon the youth of Palestine could not fail to be helpful.

The presence of a large foreign population would also help trade. The majority of these were Greeks, but there were also Arabs, Syrians, and Phœnicians. Schurer enumerates thirty-five cities which they controlled. Among those mentioned are Gaza, Askelon, Dora, Cæsarea, Apollonia, and Ptolemais, which are coast cities; and Geresa, Gadara, Scythopolis, Pella, Abila, Hippos, Bethsaida, Julius, Antipatris, Tiberias, Cæsarea, Philippi, Phasælis, and Sepphoris, which lie at or near the Lake of Galilee.

These foreigners were desirable settlers, especially the Greeks. The Greeks were the most cultivated people of the time. The Romans are said to have been more practical, but this is debatable. The influence of the Greeks was great. It is seen especially in their impression upon the country's architecture, amusements, customs, and language. Several of the public buildings were modeled after Greek designs. Of course Herod's palace was, but

so were even parts of the temple. Almost all the ruins that remain from that time show the Greek style of building. There was in Jerusalem a theater and an amphitheater (Jos. Ant. 15, 8, 1), and also a stadium and a hippodrome. (Jos. Wars, 2, 3, 1; Jos. Ant. 17, 10, 2.) They also had these in Jericho (Ant. 17, 6, 3, 5), and of course in the Greek-governed cities. Members of the poorer class, the class least open to foreign innovations, bore Greek names, as two of Christ's disciples, Andrew and Philip. Many other terms, and nearly all the terms in the department of civil government or connected with military life, were Greek or Grecianized. (Schurer 2, 1, 32.)

Had Jesus lived in a land as isolated as Norway, or in a barren and bleak land like Iceland, or in a rich and tropical land like Cuba, or amid a civilization as backward as that of Thibet or Siam, his teachings on economic questions would be far less important to us. The background would have been so utterly different from what ours is. But he met with a civilization and conditions not so very different from our own; a mixed, progressive people in touch with the whole world, and he spent most of his time amid the busiest and most progressive portion of them, the Galileans, those who most felt the quickening influences of the foreign immigrants. To what extent the vexed and complicated economic problems affected them we have not the means to

determine. We do read of labor organizations, such as "Ass Drivers' Associations" "Fullers' Unions," and "Fishermen's Clubs." We also have an instance recorded in Josephus of a man cornering the wheat market, but this is all. We may, however, be sure that whatever Jesus said concerning economic affairs, he said with a full consciousness of their intricacy, to an enlightened people, and it deserves as such our most careful study.

# THE UNHAPPY CONDITION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply, and that the Lord may bless thee in the land whither thou goest in to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go in to possess it." (Deut. xxx. 15-18.)

# CHAPTER II

## THE UNHAPPY CONDITION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

Notwithstanding all the advantages which Palestine had in Jesus' time, advantages of soil, climate, location, commerce, and immigrants, the people were very poor. The background of Jesus' teaching is one of business depression, panics, and poverty. We read of debtors going to prison, of creditors discounting bills, of a man trying to build a tower which he was not able to complete for lack of funds, and of a woman whose whole living was only two mites. "In one of Jesus' parables, everybody except the king is bankrupt; the steward is in debt to the king, the servant to the steward." (Matt. xviii. 23-35.)

The question what to eat and to wear created much anxiety (Luke xii. 22.) And this, too, among those who dwelt, not amid the barren crags of southern Judea, nor among the chilly hills of Perea, but in prosperous Galilee!

In another of Jesus' parables, a woman is pictured as having lost a drachma, and on recovering it, inviting all her friends and neighbors to share in her joy. (Luke xv. 8-10.) And Jesus asked what

woman would not do just that! It would scarcely occur to the average American woman to even so much as notice the loss of a drachma.[1] In the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples the daily bread is the first petition.

For this condition of things three parties were generally blamed—the Romans, the Herods, and the rich—though some blamed their own sin for it.

The Romans were the ruling power. In 63 B. C. Palestine became a feudal state of the Roman Empire. Pompey, called to settle a dispute between two Jewish princes, brothers, Aristobulus II. and Hyrkanus II., both aspirants to the throne, concluded to take the country for Rome. This occasioned no end of confusion. Of course the Jews resisted. Any people but the most cowardly would have done that. Several attempts were made to shake off Roman rule, but all were unsuccessful.

These attempts to regain independence cost money. The soldiers had to be supported. While they served in the army they were withdrawn from profitable pursuits. Habits were formed which made it hard for them to resume the normal activities. With some they proved to be too strong. These gave themselves up to freebooting, guerrilla warfare, and robbery. Every man who did this withdrew himself from the ranks of producers and obstructed the free intercourse of business activities.

[1] A drachma is about sixteen cents.

The Roman soldiers also had to be paid, for Rome did not wage war for charity. Wars are waged for revenue. A study of them shows that economic motives prompted nearly all of them, even the so-called religious wars.

In course of time Rome established a feudal king over them, a man named Herod, an Idumean, i. e., a descendant of Esau. He was a son of Antipater, who during the high priesthood of Hyrkanus II. had managed to get control into his own hands. Herod was one of the worst men that ever lived. He had ability, dash, daring, strategy, recourse, and executive power, but he had no character.

Herod was a fiend. One of his first acts was the murder of forty-five prominent Pharisees for a cause amounting next to nothing. He then murdered all the Asmoneans, the most beloved house in Palestine, descendants of the noble Mattathias I., the man who had dared to resist the Syrian tyrant, and through whom and his five brave sons the land had gained its freedom. Herod did not even spare his own wife, who belonged to that house, nor her two sons, his own children, all because he feared that they might some day aspire to his crown. To hate such a man is a credit to a people, a virtue in which the Jews did not fail. They hated him with a passionate hatred.

The outlawry and robbery which the confused state of the country had begotten, and which had

been nourished by hatred for the ruler, Herod succeeded in suppressing temporarily. But it broke out again as soon as he was dead. His sons, Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee and Perea, and Archelaus, who ruled Judea and Samaria, were just as mean as the father had been, but they were not as able. So the robbers had breathing room once more, and resumed activities. Judas, the son of the arch-robber Hezekias, began to terrorize Galilee (Jos. Ant. 17, 10, 5); two thousand of Herod's soldiers spread consternation through Idumea (Jos. Wars, 2, 3, 4); a Simon and his band intimidated the inhabitants of Perea (Jos. Wars, 2, 4, 2), while a certain Athronges and his giant brothers frightened the people in Judea. (Jos. Wars, 2, 4, 3.) How long this was kept up we cannot certainly say, but it was still going on when Jesus taught. Robbers stole and killed and destroyed (John x. 10), climbed over the stockades and robbed the folds, and made traveling, except in company, unsafe. (Luke x. 30.)

The taxes imposed by Herod were enormously heavy. Herod had been a great builder, as well as a great warrior. His wars and extravagance as a builder created great expense Not since the day of Solomon had Israel had a king who spent so much on building. Augustus liked him for it, but the people did not. They knew who had to pay for it.

He rebuilt Samaria, and named it Sebaste (Jos. Ant. 15, 8, 5); Capharsaba, and named it Antipatris;

Anthedon, and called it Agrippæum (Jos. Wars, 1, 21, 8); Strato's Tower, and named it Cæsarea (Jos. Ant. 15, 9, 6). In the Jordan Valley, north of Jericho, he founded Phasælis. (Ant. 16, 5, 2.) In different parts of the country he built strongholds to strengthen the country's defenses. He spent much money outside of Palestine. Tyre, Sidon, Byblus, Berytus, Tripolis, Ptolemais, Damascus, Chios, Nicopolis, Antioch; even Athens and Lacedæmon were beautified by his gifts. He built theaters and amphitheaters, galleries and aqueducts, hippodromes and palaces, and at great cost laid out parks and gardens. (Jos. Wars, 5, 4, 4; Jos. Ant. 15, 8, 1.) The temple at Jerusalem he reconstructed on so grand a scale that in comparison with it, "even the famous temple built by Solomon appeared poor and insignificant." (Jos. Wars, 1, 21, 1.) Besides these building enterprises he spent lavishly on games.

His son, Herod Antipas, was also a builder. He rebuilt on a larger scale the city of Sepphoris, fortified Betharamphtha, and built an entirely new city on the western shore of the lake of Galilee, which he called Tiberias. Archelaus, too, was fond of building. A richer country than Palestine would have been drained by such extravagances.

How large the taxes were will probably never be known. Shortly after Herod's death a committee of Jews stated to the emperor that Herod had scandalously treated them, had filled the nation full of

poverty, that they had borne more calamities from Herod in a few years than their fathers had during all the interval of time that had passed since they had returned from Babylon in the reign of Xerxes. (Jos. Wars, 2, 6, 2.) It is said that he exacted about three million dollars from the people. His children did not receive quite that amount,[1] but to raise what they received and what the Roman government demanded, nearly everything had been taxed. There was a tax on the produce of land, one-tenth for grain and one-fifth for wine and fruit. (Jos. Ant. 15, 9, 1. Edersheim, Jewish Social Life, p. 54.) There was a tax of one denarius on every person, exempting only aged people over sixty-five years, and girls and boys under the age of twelve and fourteen respectively (Hamburger N. S. p. 965.) Then there was an income tax. If the same rate which was paid in Syria maintained in Palestine, it amounted to one per cent. (Jos. App. Syr. 50.) There were also taxes levied on trades, such as that of hosier, weaver, furrier, and goldsmith, and on movable property, such as horses, oxen, asses, ships, and slaves. (Marquandt, Staatsverwaltung, 11, p. 226.) The duties paid on imported goods varied from two and one-half to twelve per cent. (Eder-

[1] Herod Antipas received two hundred talents from Galilee; Archelaus had received about double that amount from Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; Philip, another son, drew from Batanea, Trachinitis, and Auranitas about half as much; while a daughter, Salome, received sixty talents from the cities of Jamnia, Ashdod, and Phasælis. (Jos. Wars 2, 6, 3.) This amounts to only about a million dollars, but this was at a time when a laborer earned about sixteen cents a day.

sheim, Jewish Social Life, p. 55.) Then the homes were taxed, at least the city homes (Jos. Ant. 19, 6, 3), and there was bridge money and road money to be paid. There was also a tax on what was publicly bought and sold, for the removal of which tax the people plead with Archelaus, apparently in vain. (Jos. Ant. 17, 8, 4.) Besides this, every city had its local administration and raised money to pay its officials, maintain and build synagogues, elementary schools, public baths, and roads, the city walls, gates, and other general requirements. (Hamburger U. S. pp. 429-431.)

How much the Roman government collected cannot be ascertained, but there came no relief to Judea with the deposition and banishment of Archelaus in 6 A. D., and with its incorporation with Syria as a Roman province. Tacitus relates how the discontent occasioned by the burdensome taxation in the year 17 A. D. assumed a most threatening character not only in Judea, but also throughout Syria. (Tacitus Annals II. 42, 43. Comp. for year 33 A. D. Annals VI. 16, 17.) This discontent would not have come had direct Roman taxation been an improvement upon that which prevailed under the Herods.

The fiscal arrangements of the empire were very poor. Taxes were farmed out to the highest bidders, who in turn would farm them out again. They who got the contract were not paid by the govern-

ment from the taxes they collected, so that their support, or income, must be added to the taxes. How large that was we cannot know, but it was very large, as the collectors would, taking advantage of their position, often be very extortionate. Amid these unfortunate economic conditions—anarchy, war, extravagance, and taxation—the people grew poorer and poorer. Business became more and more interrupted, and want, in growing frequency, showed its emaciated features.

Of course the people felt bitter towards the Herods and the Romans, and they felt as bitter towards the rich. It was a bitter world into which the Saviour came. "To pass through the literature of the time," says Rogge, "is like passing through Dante's Inferno, except that nowhere appears any trace of that divine pity which the great Italian permits."

Evidences of hatred toward the rich are especially frequent in the book of Enoch, in the part of it which was written a little before the birth of Jesus.

"Woe unto you," it reads, "who heap up silver and gold and say we are growing rich, we have acquired everything we desire. . . . . Like water your lies will flow away, your riches will not abide with you, but shall suddenly disappear, for you have acquired it all in unrighteousness, and you shall be given over to great condemnation. (Enoch lxxxxvii. 8-10.) Woe unto you sinners, for your riches made

you appear like the righteous, but your hearts convict you of being sinners. . . . . Woe unto you who devour the finest of the wheat . . . . and tread under foot the lowly with your might. (Enoch lxxxxvi. 4-5.) Woe unto you, for you have trusted in your riches, and from your riches ye shall depart, because ye have not remembered the most high God in the days of your riches, you have committed blasphemy and unrighteousness, and become ready for the day of slaughter and the day of darkness and the day of great judgment." (Enoch lxxxxiv. 7-9.) See also Enoch lxxxxviii. 3; lxxxxix. 13; ciii. 5.

There was good reason for this hatred, judging from the stories in the Gospels. The rich were very hard. We read of one who dressed in purple and fared sumptuously every day, and who had a beggar lying near his gate to get some of the table crumbs which were cast into the street for the dogs. (Luke xvi. 19.) Blind and lame people sat by the roadside or at the door of the temple endeavoring to get alms. (Acts 8, 3; Luke xviii. 35.) They that were slow in coming, we can gather from the means employed to get them, as feigning to be blind or lame (Pea. 8, 9). Philo complains bitterly of the indifference of the wealthy to the poor, who were appropriating, he says, "The whole of nature's liberality themselves and giving no share of their wealth to any one." (Philo on the Three Virtues, III. 8.) Organized endeavor to help the poor there was none.

Not until after the destruction of Jerusalem, when practically the whole nation was steeped in poverty and the former privileged classes felt the pinch of poverty themselves, was such a thing attempted. In courts of law a poor man's rights were not regarded. Jesus tells us of a widow whom the judge shamefully neglected, presumably because she had no bribe to offer, until her persistency won where the righteousness of her cause was impotent. (Luke xviii. 1-3.)

Without bribes or gifts wrongdoers were seldom brought to trial, unless the offense was committed against Rome. A few years before Christ's time a commission of Jews that waited upon the Emperor Augustus, against the appointment of Archelaus as Herod's successor, stated that Herod had forced them to give presents; that there was no way of obtaining freedom from unjust violence without giving gold and silver for it; that he had upon unjust pretext slain several of the nobility whose property had then been appropriated; and that he had condemned unjustly others to the forfeiture of what they possessed. (Jos. Ant. 17, 11, 2.)

How hard the debtor class fared we gather from Jesus' warning against the creditor. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee,

Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Matt. v. 25-26.) Rich men who remitted to their debtors were rare, the unmerciful creditors with the bailiff at hand were frequent. In one parable one of the debtors is threatened with being sold, and his wife and children with him, and another debtor is strangled. (Matt. xviii. 25, 28.) If one was so unfortunate as to be sold, he could be subjected to all the indignities to which the slave class is liable. Male and female slaves were beaten (Luke xii. 46) and severely scourged. (Matt. xxiv. 51.) From Philo we gather that slaves were yoked to the plow, like oxen, and loaded down with burdens, and reduced by threats and punishment "to painful despondency." (Ten Festivals, Vol. III. p. 274, Yonge's Ed.)

If the people as a class felt bitter towards the Romans, the Herods, and the rich, as the authors of their misfortunes, there were a few who blamed themselves. They believed that if Israel would repent their troubles would cease, that economic and political difficulties have a moral and a spiritual source. They appealed to the scripture, where prosperity is promised to the upright. (Deut. 28.) Some of these made the unfortunate mistake of giving the Bible promises to the nation an individualistic interpretation. Individual misfortunes were held to indicate sin. This added to the existing unhappiness. "Rabbi," asked the disciple, "who did sin,

this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (John ix. 2.) Blindness, accidents, poverty, and disease, it was thought, were due to sin. (Luke xiii. 1-5.) The lesson of Job's sufferings had not been well learned. "Whoever," asked Eliphas, "perished being innocent, or when were the righteous cut off? According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same." (Job iv. 7-8.) His friends Bildad and Zophar said virtually the same (Job viii. 6), and God said that their reasonings were wrong. But Israel had not grasped this fact, and so these poor unfortunate people bore in addition to the discomforts occasioned by their oppression and poverty, the imputation and suspicion of guilt.

The need of improvement was certainly great. As the natural economic advantages of the country were many, the opportunities for improvement were splendid. If they could only get rid of certain evils: "The Herodian house," said one, "taxation," said another, "disorder," remarked a third. "What the country needs is a return to the laws of the scripture," said a fourth. Each reformer had his panacea. What was Christ's, or had he none?

It cannot escape one that it was not any of the specifics which the average reformer would have urged. There is not a word in his teachings about the evil and expensiveness of war, or the cost of extravagance; not a syllable against taxation, or the

Herodian or Roman governments; not a whisper against the cruelty of slavery, or the distractions of anarchy and robbery.

But before considering what his remedy was, it is necessary to look at the economic laws of the scriptures, since it is to these that the teachings of Jesus are most closely related.

# THE HUMANITARIAN LAWS AND TEACHINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

"For what great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. iv. 7, 8.)

# CHAPTER III

## THE HUMANITARIAN LAWS AND TEACHINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The laws and teachings which God gave Israel and which are contained in the Old Testament are surprisingly beautiful. Outside of those contained in the New Testament, none have ever been devised which are better calculated to further a people's happiness. Indeed, this is their purpose, their controlling purpose.

The New Testament books look out upon a future life, and the supreme purpose of their authors is to lead men to prepare for that; the Old Testament books have no such outlook. With the exception of a few of the later books, the interests of the Old Testament is centered in the life here. To get an ideal state, a state in which everything is done in harmony with God's will, is its great purpose.

One of the most important things which the Old Testament teaches towards attaining an ideal state is its teaching concerning work. Work in Oriental states, and even in some modern states, was held in dishonor. When Plato portrayed his ideal republic, he had such an aversion to work that he considered men who labored unfit to have a voice in its manage-

ment. Aristotle, too, regards it with contempt. (Aris. Polit. 8, 3.) Among the Hebrews to work was noble, because the Bible had ennobled it. The Old Testament tells of the manual activities of Israel's greatest men. It tells of the activities of Abraham moving from spot to spot to feed his cattle; of Jacob serving Laban, his uncle, for wages; of Joseph toiling for Potiphar, and in the prison of Egypt; of Moses herding sheep for a Median priest; of Samuel doing the work of a chore-boy; of Saul, the king, farming; and of the prophet Amos herding cattle and gathering wild figs. It tells us how God labored, and inspired Bazaleel and Aholiab to work in gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, just as he inspired Isaiah and Ezekiel to prophesy. (Ex. xxxi. 1-5.)

In the book of Proverbs we have drawn the portrait of an ideal woman. She is described as rising early while it is yet night, to provide for her household, and busy all day buying, selling, spinning, weaving, and working in the vineyard, that her house might be clothed and her husband be honored. (Prov. xxxi. 10-31.)

The good man eats the labor of his own hand and is busy like the ants all day long, while he who is a sluggard is spoken of with contempt.[1] The rights of labor were nobly respected. On no occasion were the wages of a laborer to be withheld, not

[1] Ps. cxxviii. 2; Prov. vi. 6-11; Prov. x. 26; Prov. xv. 19; Prov. xviii. 9; Prov. xx. 13; Prov. xxiv. 33, 34; Ecc. x. 18.

even for one day. The laborer was worthy of his hire. Oppression of a laborer must in nowise be allowed, no matter what his origin, and to sell one into slavery was to be punished with death. (Deut. xxiv. 7.)

Such a healthy view of work is of the utmost importance. Labor is the basis of character and the security of the state, without which the best interests of a people can neither be secured nor maintained.

Though the Old Testament knew slavery, it is of the mildest character. There is nothing like it in other Oriental countries. It is always remembered that the slave is a man who has worth for his own sake, and is before God the equal of others. When the sabbath dawned with its rest for the weary, the slave was exempted from work, and on feast-days he was to be kindly remembered. (Deut. v. 14.) The abuse of slaves was not to be tolerated. Bodily injuries, such as were inflicted upon slaves in Rome and other countries much later, would purchase him freedom. (Ex. xxi. 26.) Degrading terms were not applied. In Rome he was called a mancipium; that is, a captured article; in Greece a *δοῦλος*; that is, a bondsman—from *δέω* to bind: but in Israel he was called an עֶבֶד—a servant. He bore a name involving no disgrace, for the name servant was borne by Israel's most distinguished men, as Abraham (Ps. cv. 6), David (Ps. xviii. 1), Joshua (Jos.

xxiv. 29), Eliakim (Isa. xxii. 20), and Zerobbabel (Haggai ii. 23.)

No Hebrew could be enslaved for all his life, unless he requested it himself. (Ex. xxi. 6.) He was to be freed the seventh year, which was called the Sabbatic year. On the day on which he obtained his freedom he had to be liberally provided with treasures from his master's flocks, wine-press, and threshing-floor. (Deut. xv. 12-14.)[1]

For the weak and the dependent the Old Testament laws make the kindest provisions. Duty, not right, is their spirit, and it is the word most often upon the lips of the Old Testament teachers. Among the Romans a father had absolute right as over against his wife and children. It was not uncommon for a Roman father to sell his child into slavery, or expose it to be brought up by another. In this the law protected him. Among the Hebrews it was wholly different. Children were a heritage of the Lord (Ps. cxxvii. 3); that is, they belonged to the Lord, and were intrusted to man to develop. To judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow was a commendable virtue. (Isaiah i. 17.)

Men speak of the beautiful Roman laws. There are none. The so-called beautiful Roman laws are Roman laws revised by Justinian, who was a Chris-

[1] Compare with this the teachings of Aristotle. "The slave may be annoyed without the risk of punishment." (Nic. v. 8.) "No justice exists in relation to slaves." (Nic. v. 10.) "There is no talk of love and justice towards them [slaves] any more than towards an ass or a horse." (Nic. viii. 13.)

tian. They are beautiful because they were made to accord in spirit with the laws of the Old Testament, which made the teachings of Jesus a possibility.

Then there is no book in which the poor are so nobly remembered. Nowhere is there such stress laid upon the importance of charity. Its material, whether it is of a legislator, a psalmist, a sage, like the author of Job or Proverbs, or a prophet, throbs with care for the needy. If a farmer reaped his grain he had to leave to the poor the corners of his field (Lev. xiv. 9), his reapers had to let fall handfuls for them to glean (Lev. xxiii. 22), and when he hauled his sheaves and one was forgotten he could not go back for it, it was to be the poor man's sheaf. (Deut. xxiv. 19.) The gleanings of the olive orchards and vineyards were also for the poor. (Deut. xxiv. 20-21.) Injunctions to considerateness for the poor are many, and all sorts of blessings are promised to the generous, while the niggardly are threatened with curses. (Ps. xli. 1, 2; Prov. xxviii. 27; Prov. xxix. 7.) The prophet Isaiah represents God as saying that fasting and prayer are unavailing unless one is kind to the toilers, the hungry, and the poor (Isaiah lviii. 3-8); while Daniel says that giving alms (translated righteousness) and showing mercy to the poor cancels one's iniquities. (Dan. iv. 27; Hebrew Dan. iv. 26.)

Nor is any book so considerate of a poor man's interest. It urges charity, but as a last resort. It

seeks rather to help the poor to become independent of it. To that end it urges helping the poor with loans. God's favor is promised to such as are generous in loaning. Other inducements are not held out. It is assumed that God's favor is enough.

Interest-taking was forbidden. It was too much like profiting by a poor man's adversity. Borrowing money in order to make money, i. e., for business purposes, was not known. Society had not yet sufficiently developed for that. Men only borrowed because they were poor. To charge them interest under such circumstances was grievously wicked.[1] All the books that touch on interest-taking forbid it, prophetical, legal, philosophical, or poetical. It is forbidden in every code. (Ex. xxii. 25; Deut. xxiii. 19; Lev. xxv. 37-39.) Ezekiel classes it with idolatry, robbery, murder, bloodshed, and anarchy (Ezek. xviii. 12-13), and gives its prevalence as one of the causes of Jerusalem's downfall. (Ezek. xxii. 12.) The author of Proverbs says that it forfeits God's blessing and turns prayers into curses (Prov. xxviii. 8-10.) The psalmist says that he who takes no interest shall sojourn in God's tabernacle, i. e., enjoy God's presence and favor. (Ps. xv. 1-5.) See also Jer. xv. 10.

If a loan was made and the person who received

[1] The Phœnicians being traders, borrowed money for speculative purposes. It is probably partly on that account that the Israelites could charge them interest. (Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.) Since they helped them in their speculations it seemed right that they should share in the profits that came from them.

it could not pay it back at the time promised, no violent measures were allowed in the collection. No poor man was to be so pressed as to suffer for life's necessities. To enter a house and forcibly fetch one's due is expressly forbidden. (Deut. xxiv. 10-13.) Moreover, should one after the lapse of seven years still be unable to repay the loan it was canceled. (Deut. xv. 1-3.) No man should suffer from having a debt hang over him all his life. If he had not paid it in seven years it was presumed that he could not pay it. This assumes an honesty which many debtors do not now possess. Neither did they, in course of time, in Israel, and the law was repealed as impractical. This was not done, however, until the time of Hillel, about fifty years before Jesus' period.

The Old Testament is full of love of honesty, and praise of justice between man and man. It hates the false balance, the lying tongue, the overreaching spirit. Its pages bristle with threats against the oppressor. Nowhere are there sterner denunciations of the traducers of justice than in the Psalms and in the Prophets. The woes against such as crush the needy and oppress the poor, withhold wages and deceive in trade, that they may prosper, lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon couches in costly castles, eating the choicest foods and sipping high-priced wines to the sound of song and instruments of music, the woes pronounced

against such people is terrible. (Amos ii. 6, 7; iv. 1-3, v. 11; vi. 1-8; Jer. xxii. 13-17.) Their sin will be avenged (Ps. xii. 5), their crimes remembered (Amos viii. 7), their power broken (Ps. xxxvii. 14, 15), their habitation laid low (Micah iii. 9, 12), their city become a heap (Micah iii. 12), and their land ruined (Amos viii. 8).[1]

The laws of the Bible concerning wealth are most noble. They make property sacred, and do not allow its accumulation into the hands of a few. Moreover, they seek to secure a fair and equitable distribution of it for all.

Wealth consisted mainly in land, and every fiftieth year there was to be a redistribution of this. This fiftieth year was called the year of jubilee. The old families that had lost their land could then return to their inheritances. (Lev. xxv. 10.) With this year in view land was not sold in perpetuity. (Lev. xxv. 1-23.) Only the use of the land or the crops were sold. (Lev. xxv. 15, 16.) If the year of jubilee was fifty years off, the use of the land could be sold for fifty years; if it was only one year off, it could be sold for only one year. If, after having sold it, one was helped by a friend, or enabled in some other way to raise the requisite price, the law provided that he could get it back again. (Lev. xxv. 25-26.)

Capital was carefully protected and stealing was

[1] Other places in which oppressors are denounced are Ezek. xviii. 18; Ezek. xxii. 23-31; Ezek. xxxiv. 1-11; Ezek. xlv. 9, 10; Jer. v. 27-29; Jer. vii. 5-7; Jer. xxii. 13-17; Isa. x. 1-3.

severely punished. The thief was compelled to make restitution, sometimes four and five fold (Ex. xxii. 1), and sometimes sevenfold (Prov. vi. 31). If the thief could not make restitution, he could be sold into slavery, and if he was put to death, his slayer could not be punished. (Ex. xxii. 2, 3.) The absolute ownership of capital was, however, never acknowledged. God was the owner of everything. (Ps. xxiv. 1; Ps. l. 12; Job xli. 11; Deut. x. 14.) As regards one's fellow-men, ownership was absolute, certainly absolute enough so that infringements upon it could be severely punished.

Because love of money is so apt to occasion oppression and other evils, the Old Testament endeavors earnestly to curb it. Riches, it teaches, make people proud and tempt men to forget God (Deut. viii. 11-14), are temporary and of no value after death (Ps. xlix. 16-17). Neither does one know who will gather them after he is gone. (Ps. xxxix. 6.)

It further declares that they are unsatisfying, intoxicating, enslaving, of value only for the eye to look at, but that they bring neither rest nor righteousness (Ecc. v. 10-17). The ideal condition is described as being one of neither wealth nor poverty, but of sufficiency. (Prov. xxx. 8-10.)

Nor is there anywhere a literature in all Oriental life in which the power of the king is so limited, or in which he is so freely criticised when he dared to

be oppressive. In other states men existed for the king, in Israel the king was for the people. Go to Egypt, look at the great pyramids, on one of them —the largest—one hundred thousand men are said to have worked by forced labor for twenty years. A hundred thousand men driven by force through twenty years to build a tomb for a king! Pass from Egypt to the valley of the Euphrates. The king can muster thousands of men at once and throw them away, and their loss was not considered to be theirs, but his. Man as man has no worth except for the king and his ends. But among the Hebrews, how different! The Old Testament taught that men had worth for their own sake, that every man of Israel was precious in God's sight, that the humblest citizen was the king's brother and not his slave. God made man in his image. The king as God's representative was to bless them and not to exploit them, and his rights and duties were carefully defined by statutory law. (Deut. xvii. 14-20.)

With such regulations generally obeyed, the Israelites could not fail of being a happy people, and while they obeyed they were happy. Prosperous, free, honest, God-fearing, peaceable, they sat each man under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, enjoying his Maker's goodness. They were the happiest people in antiquity. The gloom that is so characteristic of other Oriental people, and of the non-Christian people now, as is illustrated by

their songs, did not hang over Israel. Sometimes we find Psalms that seem sad, yet how often the minor key in which the first part is written is changed toward the close into a pæan of victory! What a pity that they should ever have ignored these noble laws and teachings. But again and again they did it, and never more than in the days of Jesus. Nor was there any likelihood that matters would improve. The church leaders had strayed with the people and the people with the leaders, to what extent will be considered in the following chapter.

# THE FAILURE OF THE JEWISH CHURCH OF JESUS' DAY TO IMPROVE THE PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CONDITION

"His watchmen are blind; they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark: dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, they can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, one and all." (Isaiah lvi. 10, 11.)

"And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and tempting him asked him to show them a sign from heaven. But he answered and said unto them, when it is evening ye say, It will be fair weather, for the heaven is red; and in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day, for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed." (Matt. xvi. 1-4.)

# CHAPTER IV

## THE FAILURE OF THE JEWISH CHURCH OF JESUS' DAY TO IMPROVE THE PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CONDITION

The period of Jesus' life fell in a dark age of Judaism. The Apostle Paul, writing from what he had seen, declares:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none that understandeth;
There is none that seeketh after God.
They have turned aside, they are together become unprofitable;
There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one:
Their throat is an open sepulchre.
With their tongue they have used deceit.
. . . . . .
There is no fear of God before their eyes."
—(Rom. iii. 10-18.)

Religious life was at a low ebb. There were places in which people were hired to attend the synagogue, that the worship of God might continue. (Mathews, New Testament Times, p. 160.) The voice of prophecy had been silent for centuries, and when it was heard near the waters of Bethany and Jordan, the people thought it was the voice of a demon. (Luke vii. 33.) Domestic life was bad.

The easiness with which people secured a divorce reminds one of the corrupt days of the Roman Empire. According to the school of Hillel, a man could put away his wife if she spoiled his food, while a later rabbi, R. Akiba, would let a man do it if he found one better looking (Gitten 9, 10). How shocked the disciples were when Jesus said that there was only one proper ground on which divorce could be allowed! Why, they said, if that is so, if there is no other way out of marriage, a man had better not marry at all. (Matt. xix. 3-10.)

Of the prevailing poverty, cruelty, suffering, and oppression, we have already spoken in a previous chapter. There was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. There was naught but swearing and breaking faith and killing and stealing and committing adultery; they broke out and blood touched blood, and therefore the land mourned and the people languished, and the Roman power bore rule, and hard by the Holy Temple perched the eagle, the symbol of that power. Some of the more earnest people had grown so tired of the condition of society that they moved away from it. They were the *Ἐσσαῖοι* or *Ἐσσηνοί* or Essenes. The origin of the name is obscure, but probably comes from the Hebrew חָסִיד ghesee, which means pious.

Tired of the corruption of the cities, the strife over riches, the cruelty of slavery, the jealousies of domestic life, and the deceptions of commerce, they

resolved on founding a community where these things could not enter. To that end many went to the Desert of Engedi, near the Dead Sea (Pliny, Hist. Nat. v. 17), though some continued to reside in villages and towns. (Jos. Wars, 2, 8, 4.) Here they formed a brotherhood, a society in which there should be no individual wealth, nor commerce, or slaves, and as few women as possible.[1]

Their occupation was largely confined to agriculture (Jos. Wars, 2, 8, 4), though several other kinds of work were carried on. Commerce was forbidden as leading to covetousness, and so was smith-work in armory by which men are injured. (Philo, The Virtuous Free, 12.)

There were many admirable features about that sect. Their life was beautifully gentle, the aged and sick and those in need they waited upon like

[1] "A regulation with them is that an individual coming forward to join this sect must sell his possessions and present the price of them to the community, and on receiving the money, the head of the order distributes it to all according to their necessities." (Hippolytus, "Refutation of all Heresies" 9: 14. The tenets of the Esseni.) "They will not suffer anything to hinder them from having all things in common, so that a rich man enjoys no more of his wealth than he who has nothing at all." (Jos. Ant. 18: 1-5.) "There is no one who has a home so absolutely his own property that it does not in some way also belong to every one; for besides that they all dwell together in companies, the house is open to all those of the same notion who come to them from other quarters; then there is one magazine among them all, their expenses are all in common, their garments belong to them all in common, their food is in common, since they eat all in messes; for there is no other people among which you can find a common use of the same house, a common adoption of one mode of living, and a common use of the same table more thoroughly established, in fact, than among this tribe. And is this not natural? For whatever they, after having been working during the day, receive for their wages, they do not retain as their own, but bring it into the common stock, and give any advantage that is to be derived from it to all who desire to avail themselves of it." (Philo Treatise, Virtuous Free, 12. See also Hyppolytus Adv. Hear. 9: 14.)

sons and daughters, they were pure, truthful, kindly, chaste, and very hospitable. But they were utterly impractical. Society can never be improved by people who run away from it. John the Baptist might do it and do good, but he bade for audiences. Elijah the Tishbite might do it and do good, but he would make occasional excursions to the centers of population. But the Essenes did neither. There is no evidence that they gave the improvement of society any thought. They escaped from society, not to improve it by organizing a better one, but to improve themselves. "If the Pharisees avoided as much as possible all intercourse with the unclean Am-haarez, the Essene completely separated himself from the multitudes and formed exclusive societies in which similarity of disposition and endeavor afforded the possibility of realizing the ideal of a life of absolute ceremonial cleanness." (Schurer 2, 2, 210.)

There have been those who claimed that the Essenes were the first Christians. This, among others, is stated by so great a scholar as Greatz. A more unwarranted statement can hardly be imagined. Christ, who lived in the midst of society, and whose first public act was to hallow a marriage, an Essene! The differences between Jesus and the Essenes are radical. The Essenes were impractical, while Jesus was practical; they were sticklers for law, while Jesus never was; they hated and despised women, while Jesus mingled much in company of women;

they would only eat food prepared by a member of their order, while Jesus ate wherever he was invited; they avoided the temple, Jesus was there often; they objected to animal food, while Jesus never said a word against it. And there are other differences, as their denial of the resurrection of the body, their opposition to animal sacrifices, their prohibition of the use of oil, and the secrecy of their teachings. Jesus taught publicly, received anointings gratefully, affirmed the resurrection of the body, and at least once commanded a man he had healed to offer a sacrifice. (Luke v. 14.) In spirit especially, Jesus and the Essenes were wholly unlike.

That they were kind, peaceable, gentle, hospitable, and advocates of equality is no more proof that Jesus was an Essene than that Buddha was one. These are moral truths, are the natural outgrowth of the moral sense, and are indigenous wherever there are good and great men.

The most influential people of Jesus' time were the Pharisees. The name Pharisee is probably a nickname, like Protestant and Methodist, and was later adopted as their real name. It means separation, or separatists. To what sort of a separation, whether from unclean things or unclean men, the name owes its origin is not known, probably to a separation from both.

To this party belonged most of the scribes, sometimes also called lawyers. These men were the

copyists and interpreters of the scriptures As the legal code was embodied in the Old Testament, jurisprudence among the Jews was a part of theology. Sometimes the scribes are also called Rab or Rabbi, the meaning of which is master, or my master.

The picture we get of these scribes and Pharisees in the gospels is very unattractive. John the Baptist called them a generation of vipers. (Matt. iii. 7.) Luke calls them lovers of money. (Luke xvi. 14.) The other evangelists, too, show their dislike, but call them nothing, while Jesus goes seemingly out of his way in denouncing them. He accuses them of vanity, loving salutations in the market-places, the chief sects in the synagogue, and the uppermost rooms at feasts; of cruelty and oppression, devouring the substance of widows; of insincerity in making long prayers for pretense (Mark xii. 30-40), of pride, in making broad their phylacteries (Matt. xxiii. 5), and of destroying the Word of God by making it of none effect through their traditions. (Mark vii. 13.) He calls them hypocrites (Matt. xxiii. 13, 14, 15, 23, 27-29), whited sepulchers (Matt. xxiii. 27), proselyters, making of their converts children of hell as they were themselves (Matt. xxiii. 15), blind guides of the blind (Matt. xxiii. 24), full of extortion, excess, hypocrisy, and iniquity (Matt. xxiii. 25, 28), a generation of vipers (Matt. xii. 34), children of the devil, whose will they did (John viii. 44), and

he said to his disciples that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and the Pharisees that they could in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. v. 20.)

The most fundamental error of the Pharisees was their excessive ceremonialism. They emphasized the less important things at the expense of the more important. "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; but these things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." (Matt. xxiii. 23.)

To what extent they did this we gather from the Talmud.[1] In this we see that questions which related to social welfare received comparatively little attention. The keeping of the sabbath, ablutions, prayers, tithes, sacrifices, and feasts—these are the matters that engaged their thoughts.

This would not have been so harmful had it not been for their love of detail. The pharisaic scribes were not content with stating a principle, they had also to state all the possible applications of it. They would leave nothing to conscience, nothing to the leadings of God. To regulate every detail of life was their unwearied endeavor.

Thus, not content to state that a man must rest from his labor on the sabbath, they enumerated the

[1] For the material of the part of this chapter which deals with the ceremonialism of the Pharisees, I have very largely relied on the investigations of Schurer. (Schurer 2, 2, 91-125.)

kinds of labors from which he had to rest Somehow they had grouped these under thirty-nine different heads. How they came to limit it to that number baffles ingenuity. These thirty-nine different heads were indefinitely divided and subdivided.

One of the forbidden labors was the kindling of fire. Immediately the question arose, What kind of a fire is meant, and does it include the lighting of a lamp? When it was agreed that it did, the prohibition was also extended to extinguishing it. But there are times when lamps must be lit or extinguished, as in seasons of sickness. When this was admitted there were other problems. For all these separate emergencies separate laws were framed, which the student of law had to memorize.

Another forbidden labor was to tie or untie a knot. But it was speedily recognized that there were different kinds of knots. Might a woman on the sabbath tie a knot when she puts on a cap, or strap on her sandals? Here was a perplexity. So after discussing the question, a list of the knots that might be safely tied was made out, and also a list of the forbidden ones. The circumstances, too, under which they were tied or untied were considered.

It was forbidden to prepare food on the sabbath. This law included the heating of food. But people loved warm meals on the sabbath. This led them to put the hot food away in substances in which its heat was retained. It was known that certain sub-

stances, like oats, would steam or heat, and that food put away in them could be kept hot or be heated. This, of course, required special legislation, as it was dangerously near like cooking, so a long list of the substances in which food might be kept and also a list in which it might not be kept was prescribed.

It was forbidden to carry burdens on the sabbath. But what constituted a burden? It was decided that an article as light as a dry fig, a quantity of milk enough for one swallow, of water sufficient to moisten eye salve, and of ink enough to write one letter was a burden. This, one would suppose, was definite enough. But no. The question soon arose, suppose a house is on fire on the sabbath, how much might one carry in rescuing his property. Three meals if it happened in the evening, two if in the forenoon, and one if in the afternoon, was the answer.

And this was not all. Laws were passed forbidding things which were likely to *lead* to breaking the sabbath. For instance, it was forbidden a tailor and a writer to carry their needle and pen in their garments on Friday after their work, as they might forget to remove them, and so carry them on the sabbath day. It was forbidden a man to read on the sabbath by lamplight, lest the light being dim, he should forget himself and trim it. We read in the gospels how they murmured if Jesus healed people on the sabbath, and how they took counsel to kill him for it.

(Matt. xii. 11-14; Mark iii. 1-6.) If a man received a sprain on the sabbath, he might not even bathe it with water; if he broke a limb the doctor might not set it. The most that was allowed was assistance to women in labor.

But even deeper in its influence upon the daily life of the people were the laws relating to what was clean and unclean. A law in Num. xix. 15, provides that any open vessel which is in the house in which a person dies is unclean. The question with the rabbis was what kind of a vessel was meant, was it a leather vessel, a wood vessel, or an earthen vessel? Then how could it be purified? It was concluded that a flat plate without a rim would contract no defilement, neither could a coal-shovel or a gridiron. A hollow earthen vessel would, however, be so defiled that it could only be cleansed by destruction. A portion so small that it could only hold oil enough to anoint a little toe was still unclean. It was to these exaggerated purifications that Jesus referred when he said that they cleansed the outside of the cup and platter. (Matt. xxiii. 25.)

Even prayer was regulated. When to pray and what to pray was carefully defined. It was the custom of a house-father to pray and give thanks over his meals. For this, too, forms were prescribed. And the various articles partaken of, like bread, vegetables, vinegar, unripe fruit, cheese, required each its particular blessing.

Likewise the strictest attention was paid to apparel. A good Pharisee was careful about the number of threads and knots he had in his phylactery, and how long it was. With such puerilities and fatuities they busied themselves, and in these the children of the pious were carefully trained. It is the boast of Josephus that the training of children was so carefully attended to (Vita 2), and he also says that many had such proficiency in the law, as to shame their elders. (Contra Apion. 112.) Considering how the knowledge of the law was a matter of memory, and how much more retentive the memory is in children than in later life, this is not at all surprising.

But of what value was it? Even the absurd training which the learned in China receive is more valuable; at any rate it does not cause so much dejection, heart throbbings, and restlessness as this did. As there was a tendency to regard all the laws of equal importance, and as it was impossible to keep them all, conscientious people were very unhappy. Who can conceive the misery of such an earnest man as Paul? Knowing the bondage in which the law held people, it is no wonder he speaks of it so often, and glories so much in the freedom in Christ.[1] And it was probably worse later on. The Talmudic laws had not yet been developed in all

[1] The other New Testament writers had not studied these laws as Paul had. It is not at all certain that they had paid much attention to them.

their detail when Paul complained of the law. But their development had gone a sadly long way. The regulations pertaining to fasts and cleansings had already been carried to such an absurd extent that Jesus considered the original scriptural laws as hopelessly lost, and so he swept them away. It was his custom, if he could not reform the abuses of a law, to sweep the law itself away. (Mark vii. 1-19; Matt. ix. 14, 15.)

This emphasis on ceremonial law caused the neglect of the moral and social laws. They left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) These laws, our Saviour says, are more important than the ceremonial. Showing mercy is of more value than sacrifice. (Matt. xii. 7.) The aim of religion is goodness. The keeping of the ceremonial laws is an aid to attain to goodness, while keeping the moral law is the thing itself. The Pharisees did not see this. Hence when a young Pharisee asked Jesus which law he was to keep, Jesus mentioned only moral laws. That this young man had kept the sabbath, and made no graven image, and reverenced God's name, was certain enough; it was not so certain that his life had been pure, or that he had not borne false witness, or dishonored his parents, or failed to love his neighbors. (Matt. xix. 18, 19.) We recall how Jesus rebuked this party for indifference to parents. (Matt. xv. 5.) We are also familiar with the story

of how they brought a woman to Jesus who was guilty of adultery and how not one of them was chaste. (John viii. 1-11.)

History illustrates over and over that when attention is given to ceremonial truths, morality declines. Jesus called them whited sepulchers full of uncleanness, hypocrisy, and iniquity. (Matt. xxiii. 27-28.) Josephus also relates how they deceived the women at Herod's court, pretending that God had inspired them to foretell the future. (Jos. Ant. 17, 2-4.)

It can be truthfully said that the religion of the Pharisees was virtually heathen. The distinctive feature of the Old Testament religion—that which distinguished it from heathen religions — was its moral character. God, it taught, was holy, and his worshipers were to be holy like he. (Lev. xi. 44.) The gods of the other Oriental people were often most unholy, and holiness was not asked of their worshipers. To be pious among them did not mean to be good. To be deeply religious did not mean to be honorable. He was looked upon as the most religious person who was most careful to observe the ceremonial requirements. So among the Pharisees. Hence Christ declared that they could not, as Pharisees, enter heaven. All the heaven that they would get they had already. "Verily I say unto thee they *have* received their reward." (Matt. vi.16.) The praise of men, the opinion of the spiritually stupid, the prominent seats at feasts, were their rewards.

When they were not engaged in quibbling over ceremonial laws, they would exercise their wits in speculative discussions. "The heavenly world, the nature and attributes of God, heaven as his dwelling-place, the angels as his servants, the whole fullness and glory of the heavenly world — such were the objects to which learned reflection and inventive fancy applied themselves with special predilection. Philosophic problems were also discussed: how the revelation of God in the world was conceivable, how an influence of God upon the world was possible without his being himself drawn into the finite, how far there was room for evil in the world created and governed by God, and the like." (Schurer 2, 1, 347.) They also speculated a great deal on eschatological subjects, such as the glory of the Messianic kingdom, and there were some who cultivated theosophy. "Of ideas of reformation, which Jewish self-love would so willingly have us believe in, there is not, as we see, a single word." (Schurer 2, 1, 362.) With vital problems they were simply not concerned. The nearest they came to it was when they discussed the lawfulness of taxation, which did no good, and only fanned the flames of revolution in which the nation was finally devoured.

Upon the vast horde of suffering, erring humanity they looked with bitter scorn. They called themselves the *Caberim;* that is, neighbors, or "fellow-citizens," and all who were not of their mode

of living and thinking were unclean. Even the Sadducees were unclean (Nidda 4, 2), much more the ignorant masses. The people who knew not the law were cursed (John vii. 49), and when Jesus sought to help these they murmured.

We read of a woman who had been helped by Jesus. She came behind him to anoint his feet as he was at the home of a Pharisee. Overcome by emotions of gratitude, she moistened Jesus' feet with her tears, which she hastily wiped away. Instead of being touched by that, the Pharisee said to himself that Jesus could be no prophet for allowing it, because the woman was a sinner. (Luke vii. 39.) Not a woman of ill-repute, for the assumption of that there is no warrant; but one of the common people, and therefore a sinner. When large throngs of publicans pressed around Jesus to hear him speak, the Pharisees murmured. (Luke xv. 2.) When he ate a meal with them they were angry and shocked. (Luke v. 33.) From such a party it is evident no improvement in the economic condition of the people could be expected.

There was another party called the Sadducaic. The origin of the name Sadducee is in doubt, as is that of Essene and Pharisee, but it probably comes from *Zadok*, a priest in the days of Solomon. The characteristic feature of the Sadducees was their social position. (Schurer 2, 2, 10.) They were the nation's aristocrats. As the greater portion of

the scribes were Pharisees, the greater portion of the priests came from the ranks of the Sadducees. All the aristocratic priests did. (Jos. Ant. 13, 10, 6.) As we come in touch with this party in the gospels and Acts (Matt. xxvi. 62-65; Mark xiv. 60-74; Luke xxii. 50; John xi. 49, 50; Acts iv. 1-21; v. 17-28), it strikes us as made up of selfish, unjust, coarse, and cruel people. The Mishnah speaks of them as being as low as the Samaritans, and in many respects on a level with the Gentiles. (Nidda 4, 1-2; 7, 3-5.) Josephus tells of the cruelty of the high priest Annas. He would send out his servants to the threshing-floors, and take away by violence the tithes that belonged to the priests, with the result that some of these priests, having depended upon these tithes for their support, died from want. (Jos. Ant. 20, 9, 2.)

The best feature about the Sadducees was their rejection of the traditions of the fathers. Unfortunately their motive for this was not because these traditions obscured the scriptures, but that they were hard to keep.

That this party would do little to lift the people's burdens need scarcely be stated. The evidence for this is the general attitude of this class of people to the poor, and also the hostility which the poor felt to them. (Jos. Ant. 18, 1, 4.)

Thus neither party had the social spirit. Each cared for itself. The needy were let alone. The

hope of the nation was left to perish, for with the poor a nation's hope rests. Luther knew this, so did Wesley and Whitfield, and so does General William Booth. The fashion of the world passes away, and so do the fashionable, and that often very quickly. Flowers that bloom are nigh to destruction. Their life days are numbered. But with the shoot which just emerges from the bulb is the long life. And it is this upon which the wise gardener bestows his greatest care. The shoots are our lowest classes, just emerging, and those leaders or those nations which care best for them will do humanity the most lasting service.

# THE HUMANITARIANISM OF A RIGHTEOUS REMNANT IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

"Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleadeth with God against Israel; Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. xi. 2-5.)

# CHAPTER V

## THE HUMANITARIANISM OF A RIGHTEOUS REMNANT IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

If the mass of the people of Jesus' day and the bulk of their leaders were corrupt, proud, selfish, impractical, oppressive, and insincere, they were not all that way.

There were a few exceptions. Who they were and how great their number and influence was we have no means of knowing. The literature of the period is scant. There is very little descriptive of the period outside of what is found in the New Testament. The works of Josephus do not cover it. Josephus almost passes it over, as if it had not been. Philo wrote from Egypt, and is so Hellenized that he hardly represents the Jews. The older Jewish literature, the Mishna, popularly regarded as a part of the Talmud, dates from a hundred years later. Eleven-twelfths of the citations are from rabbis who lived in the first half of the second century. Yet, from these the main evidence for the existence of a righteous remnant in the days of Jesus is obtained.

The Talmud is not enjoyable reading. It is like walking through a desert, very dry work. Yet here and there among the arid wastes are green oases of

really beautiful utterances. These are the sayings of the righteous few.

In their discussions these men cover nearly every topic that bears upon economic welfare which is found in the Old Testament. Judged by these citations they were men of breadth, judgment, and piety. First of all they have the scriptural conception of work.[1] This, however, was not peculiar with them. The Jews were never indolent. An idle aristocracy did never thrive with them. We read of prominent rabbis who were farmers, wood-cutters, needle-smiths, blacksmiths, tailors, butchers, millers, shoemakers, and carpenters. (Joma 35; Gittim 67.) Then we find them again and again urging parents to have their sons learn a trade, and recognizing its moral as well as its economic advantages.[2] There was ground for fear that they over-emphasized the value of manual labor and that spiritual labors would suffer from it. (Barachoth 35.) Men like that could not disdain the toilers. They were brothers to them —brothers in toil, in craft, and in blood. For their interests they were jealously watchful. Prompt pay, fair play, and kind treatment are the things they enjoined. (Baba Meziah 110c; Baba Meziah 112a.) Perhaps the duties of the toilers are urged some-

[1] "He who lives on the toil of his hands is greater than he who indulges in idle piety." (Berachoth 8a.)

[2] "He who does not teach his son a trade is as if he had brought him up for robbery." (Kidduschin 29a.) "Let one always see to it that his son learns a light trade." (Kidduschin 82.) "How great is handy craft, it honors its master." (Nedarim 40 c.)

what more than the Old Testament does, such as promptness (Baba Meziah 83c), diligence, and an appreciation of an employer's kindness (Baba Meziah 89a), but this is never done in a humiliating way. Nothing unfair is asked of them, though some of the regulations prescribed are, after the manner of the rabbis, somewhat trifling. (Baba Meziah 83c; Taanith 23c; Barachoth 16a.)[1]

Very little is said about slavery. The Hebrews were not at this time in a position to hold many slaves. This is also discouraged. (Baba Meziah 60c.) Giving them freedom is urged, and so is considerate treatment. (Baba Bathra 8.) But much is said concerning beneficence. Indeed, so much is said of its importance that suspicions of self-interests are aroused. For some of the rabbis were very poor, so poor as to suffer for the necessaries of life. (Taanith 24; Pesachim 11.) Of a very noted one, Rabbi Akiba, it is said that he had scarcely straw enough for bedding. (Taanith 25.)[2] But "love thinketh no evil." Where one can only suspicion, he should not accuse.

The value of beneficence is put above that of the

[1] Instances of detailed regulations are to the carpenter to keep the shavings, but not the chips (Baba Kamma 10: 10), and to the gardener stating how much he might eat of the fruit of his employer's orchard or vineyard. (Baba Meziah 89a.)

[2] Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Gudgada, and Rabbi Simon, the son of Abba, both very learned, had often no bread. (Pesachim 11.) Rabbi Eleazar, too, was often in need of the daily necessities. He was once found sick, with nothing in the house but a little piece of garlic. (Taanith 24.)

other virtues; in fact, it is said to be as valuable as all other virtues put together.[1]

Some sayings make one think of Jesus. What means this commandment, "Ye shall walk after the Lord your God," asked Rabbi Chana, referring to Deuteronomy xiii. 4; and he answered, It means, you must imitate God." "As he clothes the naked (Gen. iii. 21), so must you clothe the naked; as he provides for the sick (Gen. xviii. 1), so must you care for them; as he comforts the sad (Gen. xxv. 11), so must you comfort them; as he buried the dead, so must you bury the dead." (Sota 13.)

All the good things of life are promised to the beneficent. If one loved property, he had the promise that God would bless his property (Baba Bathra 96), if he was spiritually minded, he had the promise of God's presence (Baba Bathra 11), if he was burdened with sin, he was assured that beneficence would atone for it, if he longed for heaven, beneficence, it was said, would insure one's entrance, and make his presence there more blessed.

During a famine Monabaz, a converted prince, divided his property and that of his father among the famine sufferers. His brothers objected to this:

[1] "The works of charity have more value than sacrifices. They are equal to the performance of all religious duties." (Succah 49a. Baba Bathra 9a.) "The value of fasting consists in beneficence." (Barachoth 6.) "God feeds the world in consequence of beneficence." (Barachoth 7.) "The virtue of beneficence weighs as heavy as all the other virtues put together." (Baba Bathra 9a.)

"Your father," they said, "multiplied the treasure, but you add nothing to it, and even spend the same." Against this he answered, "I also accumulate treasure, but with this difference, they gathered here below, I above; they brought together uncertain treasures, but I store mine where no human hand reaches; what they gathered brought forth small fruit, what I gather brings forth fruit manifold; they preserved gold and silver, I human lives; they heaped up treasures for this world, I for the world to come. Beneficence goes before you in the glories of the eternal future." (Baba Bathra 10.) Cp. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal." (Matt. vi. 19-20.)

Refusal to give alms, when one was able to do it, was called the sin of sins, as bad as idolatry. (Kethuboth 61, 68a.) Even to postpone it was to run the risk of God's curses. (Taanith 21.)

If there were those in Jesus' day who gave alms to be seen of men, such probably were also found about this time, but it was explicitly forbidden. A man who did that, the Mishna said, should be regarded as a sinner. (Chagiga 4.) Rabbi Janai said that it was better not to give at all than do it pub-

licly. (Chagiga 5.) Only heathen displayed their beneficence. (Baba Bathra 10.)[1]

But best of all they recognized that alms should spring from love. Not the fact of giving, nor the amount of the gift (Baba Bathra 16c), but the spirit in which the gift was made was said to determine its value. Gifts should be prompted by love, and be accompanied with words of advice, encouragement, and sympathy. (Succah 49c.) "Blessed is he who gives from his substance to the poor, twice blessed is he who accompanies his gift with kind and comforting words."[2]

As regards loans and interest they hold to the teachings of the scripture. Making loans is earnestly enjoined, especially with a view to helping a man to help himself. For while giving alms is encouraged, their reception is not. Receiving alms, the Bible said, was the lot of the children of the wicked, or those too indolent to work (Ps. cix. 10; Job xx. 10; Prov. xx. 4), and was held in peculiar abhorrence.[3]

It always was among the Jews, was then, is now,

[1] "True beneficence is that which is done unobserved." (Baba Bathra 10c.)

[2] "The merit of charitable works is in proportion to the love with which they are practiced." (Succah 49a.) Other references to citations about charity are found in Sotah 14a, Kethuboth 66c, Succah 29c, Baba Bathra 9a, 1c, Baba Kamma 16c.

[3] "To curtail your needs, turn sabbath into week day. Better to work on the sabbath than beg." (Pesachim 112.) "Take hold of any kind of work, however humble, so as to avoid the need of taking alms." (Baba Bathra 110). "He to whom alms are offered, but refuseth them, will see the day he will be able to bestow them." (Pea. 8c, 9.)

and we hope ever shall be. Therefore, they urged men to be careful in bestowing charity (Baba Bathra 9a), and declared that the noblest charity of all was to enable the poor to earn their own livelihood. (Sabbath 63a.) This loans would often accomplish, and therefore their importance. There are several sayings in which this appears; the most notable ones are found in Sabbath 63a, and Jebamoth 62c.

Interest on such loans was forbidden the same as in the Old Testament. They who took it were called deniers of God, and threatened with terrible curses, but judging from the praise bestowed upon those who did not take it, these were not many.[1]

Debt-burdened people were kindly remembered. A man's necessities of life could not be taken for debt, no matter how great it was. (Baba Meziah 115a.) They were especially considerate of widows, and of the wife and children of a debtor (Baba Meziah 115a; 118a), and such was the protection afforded to the feelings of the honest debtor that the creditor was ordered to keep as far as possible out of his way. (Baba Meziah 75c.)

What they say concerning riches accords with the scripture. Riches are disparaged as bringing care and trouble and some gave all their riches away,

[1] "Come see how blind increase takers are, they are deniers of God." (Baba Meziah 71.) "The transgression of the increase taker is a fivefold one, as the command against taking increase was fivefold." (Baba Meziah 75.) "He who puts out his money upon interest will see no blessings upon his labor." (Baba Meziah 71a.)

enough of them to call for a law to stop it. (Erachin 8, 14.)

If we now turn two or three centuries back, to the time of the Apocrypha, we find a righteous remnant there, giving utterance to sentiments regarding social welfare that are very similar to those of the rabbis. The Apocryphal books were written by pious men. They could not otherwise have held their place in the Catholic Church as sacred literature. That some of them are practical and spiritual, all they who have read them know. So far as they touch on economic interests they evince the tenderest humanity.

As in the Mishna, so here, there is much said concerning beneficence. Almsgiving is earnestly urged, especially in Sirach and in Tobit, the former written about 170 B. C. and the latter somewhat later. "Help the poor for the commandment's sake," writes Sirach; "and turn him not away because of his poverty." "Lose thy money for thy brother and thy friend, and let it not rust under a stone to be lost." (Eccles. xxix. 9-10.) Tobit says, "It is better to give alms than to lay up gold; for alms deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin." (Tobit xii. 8, 9.) Both these authors teach the same error which the Mishna does, that alms atone for iniquity. Tobit teaches it very explicitly, but Sirach also held it.[1]

[1] "Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for sins." (Eccles. iii. 30.) Both also teach that almsgiving will be rewarded in heaven. (Eccles. xii. 2; Tobit iv. 9.)

The danger and care occasioned by riches are also emphasized; in fact, all the laws and teachings that aim at social welfare are honored.[1]

In Ecclesiastics we have one of the sweetest passages of its kind respecting the treatment of slaves: "If thou hast a servant, let him be unto thee as thyself, because thou hast bought him with a price. If thou hast a servant entreat him as thy brother." (Eccles. xxxiii. 30, 31.)

Coming down to Jesus' day we find words almost as tender in the works of Philo. Philo was so permeated with Hellenic culture that we are not always sure that he represents Hebrew life and thought correctly, but we may be certain that it is not Greek thought he reflects when he writes of slavery, "O man, he is a hireling who is called a slave, having a most sublime relationship to you, inasmuch as he is of the same nation as yourself and perhaps he is even of the same tribe." (Philo, Ten Festivals, Vol. III. p. 274, Yonge Ed.) In this same paragraph he objects to calling slaves δοῦλοι, that is bondmen; they should, he says, be called θῆτες, that is servants; and he urges the observance of the sabbatic year which required their release, and their endowment with enough property to give them a fair start. (Deut. xv. 14.)

Knowing that there were pious men, teaching

[1] "Watching for riches consumeth the flesh, and care thereof driveth away sleep. Gold hath been the ruin of many and their destruction was present." (Eccles. xxxi. 2–6, viii. 2; xiii. 3–8.)

noble truths, a hundred years after Jesus, and knowing also that there were pious men teaching noble truths a hundred years before Jesus, it is inevitable that we infer that there were noble truths and noble men in his time. Of the existence of noble men there is evidence in the New Testament. We read of righteous men like Zacharia and Joseph and of women like Elizabeth and Mary and of devout Simeon and pious Anna. (Luke ii. 25-37.) The shepherds, too, were godly men, and doubtless they were also found among the rabbis. We are almost sure that Rabban Gamaliel the elder, the teacher of Paul, was one. (Acts v. 34; xxii. 3.) It was said some years after his death, "Since Rabban Gamaliel the elder died there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time." (Sota 9, 15.)

If we had a record of the sayings of the rabbis of the first half of the first century, we would probably find utterances among them as noble as we do among the sayings of those of the first half of the second century. But their teaching is almost wholly lost, only a few sentences of the leading ones being preserved. If we had it, it would no doubt be wearisome reading, the bulk of it given up to the petty ceremonial regulations, but with here and there a few sayings worth remembering.[1]

[1] Twice as many treatises of the Mishna deal with ceremonial matter as deal with moral truths.

During the Civil War, when slaves escaped from the South to Canada, they were helped on their way by Abolitionists. Along a road of hostile or indifferent people they would find here and there a friend, by whom they were helped on to another friend. By such a method truth has come to us. In a world of hostile or indifferent people, it has met friends, who handed it on to other friends, and so it has come down to the ages, from generation to generation. Such friends truth found in Jesus' time, who handed it down from the Apocryphal days to the days of the Talmud.

No, Jesus did not come into a world in which everybody was a hypocrite or a formalist. There was a remnant left. But the influence of that remnant was small. Their names are forgotten. They were, however, of great help to Jesus, as with the aid they gave him, he gathered the people who subsequently formed the nucleus of his church.

If the distressed conditions of the period moved Jesus to sympathy, and roused the desire to remove this distress, there was not only plenty that he might do, but plenty that would never be done unless he did it. The leaders as a class cared not for the people, and the few who did lacked power. That it moved Jesus we cannot doubt, that he determined to improve the sad conditions, we can as little doubt. Just how he went about this improvement must be considered later.

# THE VARIATIONS IN THE GOSPELS TOUCHING JESUS' TEACHINGS ON WEALTH

"Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." (1. Cor. xii. 4-7.)

# CHAPTER VI

## THE VARIATIONS IN THE GOSPELS TOUCHING JESUS' TEACHINGS ON WEALTH

Before we can consider the attitude of Jesus to his country's unhappy condition and his plan for its social redemption, if he had such a plan, it is necessary to give some thought to certain variations that are found in the gospels. No one who has carefully read them has failed to notice the different impressions they give as to Jesus' attitude to questions of material possession. If he reads John's gospel, he gets the impression that he paid no attention to it. If he reads the gospel of Mark, he concludes that he paid some attention to it. Matthew's gospel leads one to believe that his interest in it was very considerable, while in Luke's gospel questions of property are given a prominent place.

The gospel of Luke contains practically everything that relates to material possession which is found in the other gospels. In addition to that, it tells concerning the birth of Christ in a manger; the sacrifice by his parents of two young pigeons, which was the poor people's sacrifice; the song of Mary, containing the sentiment, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low

degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away" (Luke i. 52, 53); the sermon at Nazareth, in which Jesus said that he came to preach the gospel to the poor (iv. 16-20); the saying that the laborer is worthy of his hire (x. 7); the injunction to the Pharisees to give alms of such things as they could (xi. 41); the command, "Sell that thou hast and give alms" (xii. 33); the principle, "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath cannot be my disciple" (xiv. 33); the parable of the two debtors (vii. 36-50); that of the rich man who boasted of his goods and was condemned for it (xii. 16-21); the refusal of Jesus to be an arbiter between two brothers who strove about an inheritance (xii. 13-16); the parable of the good Samaritan (x. 25-38); the parable of the marriage feast, in connection with which Jesus advised his hearers to invite the poor, the maimed, the blind, the halt, to their feasts (xiv. 7-24); the parable of the lost piece of money (xv. 8-10); the prodigal son (xv. 11-32); the unjust steward (xvi. 1-13); and that of the rich man and Lazarus (xvi. 19-21).

Then, too, we find where this evangelist records the same events or addresses which are also recorded by the other evangelists, that Jesus' sympathy for the poor and for poverty is more pronounced. In recording the preaching of John the Baptist, Luke alone states how John charged the publicans not to

extort, the soldiers to be content with their pay, and the rich to share their garments with the poor. (iii. 11-15.) In describing the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, it is he again who tells us that they left *all*. The other evangelists do not mention that. (Matt. iv. 22; Mark i. 20; Luke v. 11.) The same is true of the account of the call of Matthew, or Levi. (Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 28.)

Comparing the reports of the Sermon on the Mount as given by Luke with that given by Matthew, the same facts are noticeable. Where Matthew has "Blessed are the poor in spirit," Luke has "Blessed are ye poor." (Matt. v. 3; Luke vi. 20.) Where Matthew has "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness," Luke has "Blessed are ye that hunger now." (Matt. v. 6; Luke vi. 21.) Where Matthew has "Give to him that asketh thee," Luke has "Give to every one that asketh thee." (Matt. v. 42; Luke vi. 30.) Where Matthew has "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you," Luke has "Love your enemies and do them good, and lend, never despairing." (Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 35.)

Then he inserts material in that sermon for which there is nothing corresponding in Matthew; as, "Woe unto you that are rich" and "Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger." (vi. 24, 25.) The same is noticeable in other parts of the gospel. In the story of the rich young man, Matthew has

"Sell that thou hast," Luke has "Sell *all* that thou hast." Matthew tells us that "the rich youth went away sorrowful," Luke says that "he became *exceeding* sorrowful"; Matthew states that he had "great possessions," Luke tells us that "he was *very rich*." (Matt. xix. 21, 22; Luke xviii. 22, 23.)

In recording Jesus' charge to the twelve on the occasion of their mission, Mark represents him as allowing them the use of a staff on their journey, while Luke, in common with Matthew, represents him as allowing them nothing. (Mark vi. 8; Matt. x. 9; Luke ix. 3.)

Much has been made of these differences, but they amount to little.

That John should say anything concerning questions of wealth is not to be expected. He wrote his gospel to strengthen belief in the divinity of Jesus. (John xx. 21.) Discussions of Jesus that bore on questions of wealth would not be in the line of his purpose.

Nor is it strange that such discussions are not found in Mark. According to Papias, this gospel is based upon reminiscences of Peter. The consensus of biblical criticism is that this statement is reliable, except that not the present gospel, but an older gospel upon which it is based, was formed from these reminiscences. Peter was a genial, frank, impulsive, large-hearted man, a good talker, and a splendid witness, but had a somewhat limited edu-

cation. Upon a person of that type deeds rather than speeches would make an impression, and these we find in the gospel of Mark, and they are told in a realistic, rough, racy, unvarnished, truly Petrine way. Both John and Mark must be supplemented by a record, or records, which take note of the speeches of Jesus, which John omitted because of his purpose, and Mark because of his source.

Such records we have in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Both record several discussions of Jesus that bear on matters of property. That Luke's record should be much the fuller of the two, and that he should paint the Saviour's love for the poor and his fear of riches in much stronger colors than Matthew, is not strange, in view of his position and character.

Luke was a dear friend (Col. iv. 14) and fellow-laborer of the apostle Paul (Philem. 24). Paul had counted all things but loss for the excellency of Jesus. (Phil. iii. 8.) It is extremely likely that Luke had done the same. Indeed it is almost certain.

His calling before he began to preach was that of a physician. This ranked him with the educated and respected class. As a preacher of the gospel and a co-laborer with Paul he was made as "the refuse" of the world. (1 Cor. iv. 13.) He had sacrificed far more for his Master than had Matthew, at least than the original Matthew, who was only a

publican. Sayings of Jesus which set forth the value of sacrifice would seem to such a man to be exceedingly dear and important.

The people to whom he wrote were such as would more likely be impressed with the benevolence and sympathy of Jesus than with anything else concerning him. Luke was a gentile Christian (Col. iv. 10-14) who wrote to gentile Christians. He addressed his gospel to Theophilus. This man was probably the wealthy Theophilus of Antioch, Syria, of whom Clement makes mention. (Clementine Recognitions X. 71.) He was at any rate Luke's *patronus libri*, the man whose wealth enabled him to publish his gospel. Through the assistance of this man he sought to reach the churches of the Greek world, and commend the Saviour to such Greeks as did not yet believe in him. The Greeks we know revered and extolled the perfect man, the man of beauty, power, and sympathy. Whoever sought to convert them to Jesus would have to keep these national characteristics in mind, and like a wise and tactful man Luke did this.

Incidents which might possibly be taken as reflecting on the majesty or love of Jesus, such as his despairing cry on the cross (Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34), or his seeming unwillingness at first to help the Canaanitish woman (Matt. xv. 26; Mark vii. 27), he leaves out of his narrative. Incidents which would most likely commend the Saviour, such as set

forth his sympathy and thoughtfulness for the needy, he made as much of as possible. This is strikingly seen in his stories of Christ's miracles. He alone will tell us, for instance, when Jesus raised a child, that it was an *only* child (viii. 42), when he healed a son, that it was an *only* son (ix. 38), when he healed a hand, that it was the *right*, the one most needed (vi. 6).

He gathered his material from a people among whom the sympathy of Jesus for the poor was fondly cherished. Luke was not an eye-witness of what he wrote. He could not describe what he had seen and heard as John could. (1 John i. 1.) He had to depend in part upon the statements of those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word. (Luke i. 1.) To meet these men he probably traveled to Palestine, as many of them must have lived in that country. At any rate, he got some of his information from Palestinian sources. We learn this from the many Hebraisms in the first two chapters of his gospel. The presence of various strange words in the section of his gospel peculiar to it—from chapter ix. 51 to chapter xviii. 14—also points that way. These strange words are absent when Luke relates what his gospel has in common with the others. A translation from a foreign tongue, like the Aramæan, gives a natural explanation for them.

From thirty to fifty years after Jesus, when Luke

collected the material for his history, the sayings of Jesus in the interest of the poor must have been peculiarly cherished. The Palestinian Christians were generally very poor. The book of Acts and the epistles of Paul show their need of constant help. (2 Cor. viii. 4-13; ix. 12; Gal. ii. 10.) Such sayings of Jesus as were most to their interest were naturally much discussed.[1] With glowing enthusiasm these people would tell Luke of Christ's interest in them, and describe the state of the church, fresh from the influence of her risen Lord, when the needy were kindly remembered, when a beautiful spirit of fellowship bound all the Christians together as one family, when no one said that aught had was his own, but when all things were held in common.[2]

Thus it came to pass that Luke has given us a different view of Jesus' attitude to matters of property than we gather from the gospels of Mark and of John, or even from Matthew.

Is this view that Luke gives us of Jesus' attitude to property an accurate one? Do not the various influences—the bias, if you please—that wrought upon his mind in the production of his gospel cast suspicion upon its trustworthiness? Why should it?

[1] The epistle of James, which arose among them, suggests an unfriendly feeling among them toward the rich. (James v. 1-6.) This epistle has the same characteristics which are found in the gospel of Luke.

[2] See the influence of these Palestinian informants, or sources, in the first part of the book of Acts. (Acts ii. 43-47; iv. 32-37.)

How do we know that these influences were not the very things needed to picture the Saviour accurately? Luke's own liking, that of the people for whom he wrote, and that of those from among whom his material was collected, for a Christ who made much of the poor, and who was deeply interested in matters of property, might have been the agencies of God to give the world a symmetrical view of its Lord. If God makes the wrath of man to praise him (Ps. lxxvi. 10), he can certainly make use of a people's likings.

At any rate, the veracity of a gospel is not to be impunged because its author is a deeply sympathetic and tactful man, if he is otherwise thorough. To object to Luke on that ground is practically equivalent to saying that he was too good a man to be an evangelist. To claim that the poor Christians of Palestine idealized Christ's sympathy for them and that their traditions of his interest in economic affairs were not true, is sheer assumption.

There is another variation found in the gospels that solicits our attention. It is between Luke and Matthew as regards the place where one of Jesus' discussions was given, and also as regards a difference in their phraseology where they relate the same addresses.

Biblical critics are virtually agreed that we have in the sixth chapter of Luke an account of the same sermon which is more fully recorded in the fifth,

sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew.[1] There is some difference between these accounts. The question is, Which of the two is the more accurate?

The probability is that Matthew's gospel is the older. This is in itself not of much value, but it has a certain weight in Matthew's favor. So has the fact that he was an eye-witness of the events which he describes. So, too, has the unity that runs through his record of the discourse. It is defensive throughout, and successively deals with themes which Jesus, as we learn from other parts of the gospel, esteemed most vital. This order and unity would hardly exist had it been delivered in that detached and fragmentary manner which Luke suggests.

In the interest of harmonizing details as to the location—Matthew giving the mountain as the place, and Luke the plain—and also to account for the somewhat loose connection of some of the sayings in the latter part of Matthew's discourse, Professor Bruce has suggested that the various themes were discussed on successive days during an outing which Jesus took with his followers; perhaps the beatitudes on one day, the righteousness of the kingdom on another day, and prayer on a third, some of the discussions taking place on the mountain and some at

[1] There are some conservative scholars who believe that they are reports of separate discourses, one given at the commencement, another later in the ministry. Popular teaching requires repetition of the same forms, and to varying multitudes. Jesus, it is claimed, would often repeat his discourses. This theory obviates the difficulty of the difference in the phraseology.

its base. This is not improbable. Indeed, it is so probable, and the divergence as to the location is such an insignificant matter, that it need not further detain us.

The divergencies in phraseology, where they affect the teachings of Jesus, as where Matthew represents him as saying "Blessed are the poor in spirit," while Luke says that he said "Blessed are ye poor," are more serious (Cp. Matt. v. 3, 4, 5; Luke vi. 20, 21). On this divergence Godet, in his commentary on Luke, says: "The text of Matthew presents here two important differences: First, he employs the third person instead of the second; 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'; 'They that mourn, for they shall be comforted,' etc. The beatitudes which in Luke are addressed directly to the hearers, are represented here under the form of general maxims and moral sentiments. Second, in Matthew these maxims have an exclusively spiritual meaning; 'The poor in spirit, they who hunger after righteousness.' . . . Two things appear evident to us: (1) That the direct form of address in Luke, 'Ye,' can alone be historically accurate. Jesus was speaking to his hearers, not discoursing before them; (2) That this first difference has led to the second; having adopted the third person and given the beatitudes that Maschil form, so often found in the didactic part of the Old Testament (Psalms and Proverbs), Matthew was obliged to bring out ex-

pressly in the text of the discourse those moral aims which are inherent in the very persons of the poor whom Jesus addressed directly in Luke, and without which these words, in this abstract form, would have been somewhat too unqualified." (Godet, Gospel of Luke, p. 201.)

The explanation of the variation appears to be this: On account of various ceremonial rules, most of them having reference to purifying, the conscientious Jew could not profitably carry on business. There were several days when it was impossible. This turned to the advantage of the less conscientious element, the class which ignored ceremonial regulations. As a result, they got the business and the capital, while the good became poor. From these the larger number of the hearers of Jesus came. He acted like a magnet in Judaism, drawing the morally better to him. Hence he could say that if one heard and saw him, and believed not, that he stood by his unbelief condemned, as one who loves darkness rather than the light, because his works are evil. (John iii. 19.)

These people were not only poor, but were also perplexed. They believed that poverty and riches came directly from God, and that his faithful servants were rewarded with earthly possessions. How to reconcile their poverty with such a conception of God's government was exceedingly puzzling. It bewildered them. Why were the unrighteous so

prosperous, and they so poor? What had they done to deserve it? Is it not natural that Jesus should have opened his discourse with comforting words for these people? They certainly needed them, needed to know that their poverty instead of being a sign of God's disapproval was rather an evidence of their acceptableness, and so adapting his words to their need, Jesus said, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled . . . . but woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "Woe unto ye that are full, for ye shall hunger." (Luke vi. 20; xxi. 24, 25.) These latter sayings suggest that among his hearers were also some of the wealthy ones. Well-to-do, sleek, self-satisfied, and proud, they were as much in need of discomposure as were the poor of comfort.

Another argument in favor of the phraseology of Luke is, that the less spiritual saying—such as his is—would not likely be substituted for the more spiritual saying of Matthew. What, then, are the results? That Luke's phraseology is historically the more accurate and that Matthew has simply given us an interpretation of it, and that the two Gospels are in perfect accord in their teaching.

If we may assume that these words were in the original apostolic Matthew, and there is no reason why we should not, Matthew, a native of Palestine, a disciple of Jesus, knowing the character of the

poor to whom Jesus addressed the sermon, as people who hungered and thirsted for righteousness, and recognizing that the sayings of Jesus were apt to give a wrong impression when they were generally applied, changed their phraseology and gave us their meaning instead of their form, Luke, who was a foreigner, less acquainted with the character of Jesus, had no other recourse but to write literally what was told him, or what he found in his sources.

The other variations in the phraseology do not affect the teaching, and may be passed over in silence.

The accusation has been made against Luke that he colors his material; that he describes things that were exceptional as universal; that he is given to exaggeration, and to converting the language of enthusiasm into a sober record of facts. He relates, they say, in one place how Jesus declared to a great multitude that unless they forsook *all* they could not be his disciples (xiv. 33), whereas, in another place he shows that Jesus had disciples who had property (viii. 3); that a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus that *all* the inhabited earth should be taxed (ii. 1), whereas, we know that it only concerned the Roman Empire; that all who believed had all things in common (Acts ii. 44; iv. 32), whereas, he instances Barnabas as being phenomenally self-sacrificing (Acts iv. 36); that the five thousand or more Christians (Acts ii. 41; iv. 4) were *all* of one heart and

soul (Acts iv. 32), whereas, we know, from his own story, that they were much divided (Acts vi. 1).

Sifting this down, it simply shows that Luke might, as an eloquent historian, have used an occasional universal for a particular, but more cannot be proven; and who can prove that Augustus did not speak of his realm as embracing the inhabited earth, or that Jesus did not make that severe demand of a fickle crowd, or that the early disciples were not at first all united, but in the course of time disagreed? When the opportunity for testing the historicity of Luke is offered he stands the test well. We are greatly indebted to him for the valuable light that he has thrown on the life and teachings of Jesus, and any account of Jesus which depreciates Luke is to that extent incomplete.

Each gospel makes its contribution toward helping us to estimate Jesus' teachings. To each we owe a special debt. For the variations that exist between them we are grateful. They make the Saviour better known. They blend together like prismatic colors, into the white light of a perfect revelation.

# THE PURPOSE OF JESUS' MINISTRY

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to
the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."
—(Luke iv. 18, 19.)

# CHAPTER VII

## THE PURPOSE OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Did the unhappy economic conditions of Palestine touch Jesus, and did he endeavor to improve them, or had his ministry a different end in view?

That the unhappy conditions of the people pained him no one who reads the gospels can possibly fail to notice. His first recorded sermon shows it. It was based on a text from Isaiah, every word of which throbs with sympathy for the unfortunate. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; Because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Is. lxi. 1, 2; Luke iv. 18, 19.) When a few months later John the Baptist wanted to know if he were the Messiah, he gave the fact of his sympathy and helpfulness toward the unfortunate as proof: "Go your way," he said to John's messengers, "and tell John what things you have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them." (Luke vii. 22.) The

welfare of the unfortunate class, such as the sick, the blind, and the poor, lay close to his heart.

It was on this account that the poor were so devoted to him. They were his most devoted followers. When he delivered the largest discourse that has been recorded, they formed the bulk of his hearers. Otherwise the words with which he opened this discourse would be devoid of meaning. "Blessed are ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh . . . . but woe unto you that are rich; for ye have received your consolation." (Matt. v. 3; iv. 6; Luke vi. 20, 21-24.) Some of those who followed him worried about their daily necessities. "Be not anxious," he said to them, "for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on; for the life is more than food and the body than raiment." (Luke xii. 22, 23.)

It must not be inferred from this, as has sometimes been done, that his love for the poor was to the exclusion of his love for the rich. He was no partisan. He never played the rôle of a demagogue. Class feeling was already too bitter, he would remove it, not intensify it. How far Renan and others are wrong, in representing Jesus as an enemy of the rich, is seen from the number of well-to-do people that he gathered around him. There was Joanne, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward (Luke viii. 2), Mary, the

mother of James, and Salome, who brought spices to anoint him in the sepulcher (Mark xvi. 1), Mary Magdalene, who offered to take charge of his burial (John xx. 15), and the sisters of Bethany, who opened their homes for his entertainment (Luke x. 38-42). All these were people of more or less wealth. Mary anointed Jesus with an ointment which, according to the estimates of the apostles, was worth three hundred denarii, equivalent to the wages of a laborer for a whole year (Matt. xx. 2.) She had been used to luxury, or else she would not have thought of such an expensive ointment. It shocked the simpler tastes of some of the disciples. There were other disciples who had money. The scribe to whom Jesus said, in answer to his offer to follow him, that he had no pillow for his head, was used to comfort, else Jesus would have used some other method to test his sincerity. (Matt. viii. 19.) Of the young ruler we are plainly told that he was very rich. (Luke xviii. 23; Matt. xix. 21.) Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man. (Matt. xxvi. 57.) Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and probably had means. (John xix. 39.) To these we must add John the apostle, the dearest of all his friends. John's father was an employer of labor (Mark i. 20), and he was himself a man of influence. It was strong enough at the home of the high priest to secure admittance for him and his friend Peter at Jesus' trial. (John xviii. 15, 16.) Peter also had

some means. (Matt viii. 14.) Matthew had means enough and a home large enough to spread a feast for a great company of publicans and Jesus and his disciples, who all sat down together. (Matt. ix. 10; Mark ii. 15; Luke v. 27.)

Jesus was the friend of all. He had his followers among all ranks of life. His great heart beat with sympathy for everybody. His affection was too great to be focused on a single class. The Pharisee who invited him to dine at his house was as dear to him as the penitent sinner who bathed and kissed his feet. (Luke vii. 36-50.) He accepted the invitation of Simon the Pharisee at whose home he met the Pharisees, the nation's pride, as gladly as that of Matthew the publican, at whose board he met the publicans, who were the nation's shame. (Matt. ix. 10.)

Did Jesus seek to improve the existing conditions? Indeed he did. It was in his mind from the beginning of his ministry. "Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel." (Mark i. 14, 15.) The meaning of the term the "Kingdom of God" has been much discussed, but scholars are not of one mind as to its full significance. That it had a social meaning is generally admitted. The term was not a new one. Jewish teachers had used it before it was used by

Jesus. It denoted in their mouth a kingdom of the saints with the Messiah at their head. This kingdom was to be very blessed. The reign of the Messiah would make an era of universal gladness. Some pictured its glories most glowingly. War, strife, discord, and quarrels would cease, and peace, love, righteousness, and faithfulness prevail. Wild beasts would lose their enmity. The old would be as vigorous as the young. Men's age would be increased to nigh upon a thousand years. Sorrow and sickness would cease, and men would no more grow weary at their work. Even the deceased Israelites were to participate in the glories of this era, and to that end were to arise. (Sibylline Oracles, Baruch and Book of Jubilees.)

Jesus used the term repeatedly. He never intimated that he did not use the term in the commonly accepted sense. Of course this does not mean that he meant to encourage the hope that all that had been said respecting it should be realized; but it does mean that he encouraged belief in the main facts which the use of the term suggested—that there was to be inaugurated a kingdom of saints of which the Messiah was to be the head, and that there would be a great improvement in people's social welfare.

His interest in people's social welfare was inevitable, because of his sympathy. He was very tenderhearted. The least suffering on the part of others

pained him. He was moved with compassion for those who were hungry. (Matt. xv. 32.) He was filled with pity for such as were weary. (Matt. ix. 36.) He breathed the spirit of the great Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," he said. (John xiv. 9.) The Father pitied suffering sparrows, much more did he pity suffering men. (Luke xii. 6.)

But there was a deeper reason than sympathy and pity. Jesus believed that social well-being here has an influence on one's well-being in the hereafter, and to promote that was the great purpose of his ministry. Jesus thought in ages. He lived in the presence of eternity. The future life was ever before his vision. On no subject is his teaching so full as on life after death. A hundred references to it are scattered through the gospels. The gospel of Luke, whose author is sometimes called the "Socialist Evangelist" (Rogge, p. 10), because of his marked love for the poor and his delight to picture Jesus' love for them, reports twenty-nine. Some of these references in the gospels relate to the resurrection, of which Jesus is to be the agent (John xi. 25); some to the judgment, at which Jesus is to preside (Matt. xxv. 32-41); some to the glories upon which those who are approved shall enter (Luke xx. 36); some to the miseries which such as are rejected shall endure (Luke x. 13, 14; xiii. 25-28).

The ethical truths, obedience to which was urged by Jesus, have the future life for a background. He urged people to believe in order that they might have life eternal (John vi. 40); to obey that they might not see death (John viii. 51); to forgive that the Father might not deliver them up for punishment (Matt. xviii. 15-35); to be benevolent that they might make friends in heaven (Luke xvi. 9); to be humble that they might gain glory hereafter (Luke xviii. 17); to watch and pray so as to stand before the son of man (Luke xxi. 36); to repent so as to escape from woe (Luke x. 14); to be discreet and meek and believing so as to escape in the judgment (John xii. 48; Matt. xii. 36; v. 22).

The same is true of economic truth. The great obstacles to the progress of truth are care and worldliness. "The care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word." (Matt. xiii. 22.) Who is more liable to care than he who is anxious what to eat and to drink, and who are so liable to worship wealth as the rich? He urged upon men the faithful use of money, that they might obtain great spiritual riches in the life that follows. (Luke xvi. 10-12.) He instructs them to be kind to the needy, so they may not land in gehenna. (Luke xvi. 19-23.) Our riches are a trust, their faithful use will merit God's "Well done," their unfaithful use will be met with his terrible "Depart." (Luke xix. 7.)

If earthly misfortunes created by unfortunate wealth conditions grieved him, they did not hurt him half as much as that some men would not obey God, and therefore be miserable in the life which is to come. If he grieved because men were poor, he grieved more because they were wicked. If he was troubled because they suffered hunger and cold, he was more troubled because they were not properly taught—they were like sheep not having a shepherd. (Matt. ix. 36.) If he was grieved at the multitudes because of their physical distress, he was more grieved to see them live in sin, and go to death and judgment unrepentant, and therefore unprepared. He did not agonize over people because they were poor, he did not weep over them because they did not have enough to eat, but he agonized and wept because they rejected God's mercy. The tears of Olivet and the bloody sweat of Gethsemane were not poured out because the multitudes experienced the hardships of poverty. "The worm that never dieth," "The unquenchable fire," "The eternal torments," "Hell," these were in the estimation of Jesus by far the worst evils from which men could suffer. Compared with these, the evils of poverty are small. In fact, Christ would account them a blessing, if they served to soften the heart and lead a man to goodness and God. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul" (Matt. xvi. 26), expresses the views of Jesus as to

the comparative importance of welfare in the present or in the future life.

In all his endeavors to help the poor he sought more than their earthly welfare. In all his activities for men the desire to promote their spiritual welfare was prominently present. If he desired a greater equality in the distribution of riches, he desired it not simply that the poor might have more comforts, but also and mainly, that being freed from distracting cares, they might be more ready to receive the gospel. If he urged the rich to give, he desired not simply to relieve the necessities of the recipient, but also and mainly, that the poor being freed from anxiety and the hearts of the rich being softened through giving, they might both be more amenable to truth. He made the lame walk to remove their infirmity, but also and mainly, that their feet might be directed to walk the path of life. He opened the eyes of the blind to enable them to share in the blessings of vision, but also and mainly, that their eyes might be opened to the goodness and love of God. So he fed the poor, and pitied them, not simply because they were hungry, but that he might feed their souls on the bread of life. So he gave gifts to the poor, not simply to help them in their temporal needs, but that they might be more ready to receive him, the great gift of God. Between the seriousness of earthly discomforts and the sufferings of the spirit world, there was, in Jesus'

view, no comparison. Better lame, he says, than to be lost. Better blind than to miss entering heaven. "If thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having two feet to be cast into hell. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out; it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell." (Mark ix. 45-47.) Better hungry all one's earthly life than fail of life eternal.

His methods for securing better wealth conditions were for that time unique. Until then people had generally sought to improve the wealth conditions by the enactment of better laws, by combinations, and organizations; in short, by the purely economic methods. This is the favored way yet. Labor leaders, professors, reformers, and agitators depend almost exclusively upon them.

But with purely economic measures Jesus had nothing to do. He urged no economic reforms. To call Jesus a "Social agitator," the Sermon on the Mount "A treatise on political economy," or to speak of him as designing an "industrial democracy" is absolutely unwarranted. (The New Redemption, Herron, pp. 34, 80.) Concerning questions of production Jesus said nothing. On questions of exchange he hardly touched. To problems of distribution he gave only a little thought. The subjects of labor, whether it should be free or slave, of

wages and hours of wages, of rent, interest, and taxation, are never discussed. Though himself a carpenter and the son of a carpenter (Mark vi. 3; Matt. xiii. 55), he never said aught on the question of a workingman's pay. All that is recorded is that he once said that a laborer is worthy of his hire. (Luke x. 7.) Of the existence of master and slave he speaks in the most matter-of-fact way. (Matt. x. 24.) He takes for granted that the slave does what his master orders him to do, and he implies that herein lies his duty. (Lukex vii. 7-10.) The theoretic discussions about taxation he avoided. When they tried to get his opinion he gave it, but not until then. He told them that whereas they enjoyed the privileges which the rule of Cæsar conferred, that they were bound to support it. (Mark xii. 14-17; Matt. xxii. 15-22.) Obligations to the state, he held, must be met as well as obligations to God.

He denounced deceit and oppression, but one need not be an "economic agitator" to do that. It must not escape one that his denunciation was practically confined to what he saw in the leaders of religion. (Matt. xxi. 31, 32; xxiii. 23; Mark xii.38-40.) His purpose was not that of an economist, or an agitator, or a political or social reformer, but rather that of the clergyman.

This accounts for his comparative peace with the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the moneyed classes, and filled the public positions. We read

that he predicted that the chief priests, who were Sadducees, should have part in his crucifixion. (Mark viii. 31; x. 33.) We also read that they once joined with the Pharisees in tempting him (Matt. xvi. 1-6), but they generally left him alone. His trouble was with the Pharisees, the leaders of religion. They accused him of blasphemy, of making God his father, and of breaking the laws of Moses. Had Jesus been a social agitator his troubles would have been with the Sadducees. But they did not disturb him until they feared his growing power. Then Caiaphas, the chief priest and leader, advised that Jesus be put out of the way, and put out of the way he was. (John xi. 50).

In his desire to promote the social well-being of the people, Jesus relied on moral means. Herein lay the uniqueness of his method. It was an axiom with Jesus that there could be no better social condition until the people were better. "The kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe in the gospel." (Mark i. 14, 15.) There could be no kingdom of God until the people repented. Your life, he said, has been a failure, your motives have been wrong, your habits are bad. Change your life, alter your motives, improve your habits, turn your thoughts from self to God, seek his plans and live accordingly. "If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I

will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. vii. 14); so taught an ancient prophet, and so taught Jesus as he went up and down Palestine. The land might be healed and the kingdom of God established, but not until the people repented.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) Right conditions are not possible unless a people walk in fellowship with God. Men can be right economically only when they are right religiously. Be meek, he says, be pure, be benevolent, charitable, unselfish. "Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful." (Luke vi. 36.)

It is the failure of not realizing the importance of a moral transformation on the part of people that constitutes the weakness of modern socialism. Socialism makes no appeal to character. It never urges purity or self-restraint or love as if they were essentials.

> "Ah, your Fourier's failed,
> Because not poet enough to understand
> That life develops from within."
> —(Aurora Leigh, Book II.)

Socialists also err in their reliance upon outward conditions to change character. Jesus acknowledged the influence of outward conditions on character, but he did not recognize them as the proper agents by which to change it.

It is also worthy of note that he dealt little with men in masses. He dealt with men individually. There are several instances of personal conversations. He selected twelve men whom he trained to be sent forth. He seems to have feared large crowds. In this respect, too, he differs from the socialists.

But most of all he differs from them in that they make social welfare in this world an end. A well-filled larder, a good bank account, a home, with books and pictures, and a moderate amount of time for rest and enjoyment is all they desire. Jesus said that if one has all that, and has not developed his soul, his life is a failure.

And yet with Jesus and not with socialists do social questions assume the greater importance. In the one case the inconveniences and sufferings which unjust conditions occasion are only for this life, as far as the individual is concerned; in the other, because of the bitterness, anxiety, and hardness which they engender, and the bad effects of that on the soul, they may follow him to the hereafter.

# THE ECONOMIC TEACHINGS OF JESUS' LIFE

"And many hearing him were astonished, saying, whence hath this man these things? And, what is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hand? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him." (Mark vi. 2, 3.)

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE ECONOMIC TEACHINGS OF JESUS' LIFE.

Notwithstanding that the great purpose of Jesus was the promotion of men's spiritual welfare, there are a few topics, relative to questions of wealth, concerning which he has left us instruction. The selection of these topics by Jesus was probably determined by the great influence which one's attitude to them has on his spiritual development. It will be seen from their consideration that they are teachings which men are prone to disregard. The first topic to consider is the advantage of struggles in the formative period of life. This is taught by Jesus' example.

That the life of Jesus, as well as his utterances, teach lessons, the Christian world has universally recognized. Each act in his life is important, each experience suggests a truth, each feature is fraught with meaning.

Not the least significant feature of that life is its boyhood struggle with poverty. He grew up "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground—he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah liii. 2, 3.) His

position in the social scale was that of a workingman, and the reputed son of a workingman. The leaders of society did not count him as of their number.

This feature of his life is all the more significant because he chose it. It was not unintentional that Jesus' life was with the working-classes. It was no accident that he was not an heir to fabulous riches. It was no chance that made his birthplace Bethlehem, and the home of his boyhood Nazareth, instead of some splendid city like Cæsarea, Jericho, or Jerusalem. Of all who ever were born he only had his choice of mothers, birthplace, riches, rank, and companionship. "Being originally in the form of God, . . . . he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." (Phil. ii. 6, 7.) "Though he was rich for our sake he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God, . . . . and the word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (John i. 1, 14.) And when the word became flesh he chose a poor girl for his mother, the country for his birthplace, hardship for his boyhood and youth, laborers for his companions, and though he was of royal blood, not once referred to it.

He chose a poor girl for his mother. Mary, the mother of Jesus, belonged to the humbler ranks of life. The man to whom she was betrothed, and

whom she married, was the village carpenter, an upright man named Joseph. Both of them were poor. This is evinced by all the acts and incidents respecting them recorded in the gospels.

The first one is the manner of Jesus' birth. An order from Augustus had driven them to Bethlehem. The only inn in the village was full, and nothing but a cave or stall was to be had for shelter. Had they been people with money some other arrangement would undoubtedly have been made, especially under the circumstances. But a stall or stable was all they could obtain, and there it was that they looked in the face of Mary's first born child. Poor, lonely, suffering strangers! The wealthy people of Bethlehem gladdened them not with their calls, and the leaders of the town probably took no notice of their need.

God alone remembered them. Watching their flocks by night, some shepherds were startled by a halo of light. In a vision in which the angel of the Lord came to them they were told that the child in the stable was the long-expected Messiah. With the vision still burning in their minds they told the lonely parents what they had seen and heard. So their hearts were gladdened, and their faith waxed strong.

Another fact which indicates their humble condition is their sacrifice at Jerusalem. When Jesus was forty days old they brought him to Jerusalem for presentation to the Lord. It was customary on

such occasions for parents to offer something in grateful acknowledgment for God's care of the mother and for the gift of the child. The usual offering was a lamb, the price of which was at this time about a dollar, but in case the people were poor, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons. Grateful hearts like Mary's and Joseph's would make the offering as large as their circumstances allowed. But all they offered were the pigeons. They offered the poor man's sacrifice.

The third fact which suggests their need are the gifts of the Magi. Herod the king, crazed with jealousy, had heard of the birth of a king. His plot to murder all the babes in Bethlehem and vicinity compelled the flight to Egypt. As if preparing them for the flight, these Magi gave them gold and spices. This act of the Magi has such a providential aspect as to make it almost sure that it was a case of the almighty provider caring for the needs of his penniless children.

If he chose for a mother a godly woman, unknown to fame and riches, he chose for the place in which to grow up the country. For Nazareth was virtually country. Until the days of Jerome the place is never mentioned. Its identity was very nearly lost, its name forgotten, so that even now we are not certain how it should be spelled; Nazareth, Nazaret, or Nazara. These things would not have happened had it had some size. It probably was the small-

ness of the place more than its wickedness that caused Nathanael's skeptical query, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46.) It was not a beautiless place. From a hill above the place, five hundred feet high, the choicest part of Palestine was visible. To the north lay the narrow and fertile plain of Asochis, beyond which rose the wood-crowned hills of Naphtali, with snow-capped Hermon in the far horizon beyond. To the east rose beautiful Tabor, clothed with terebinth and oak. To the west his gaze could rest on Carmel, and on the sea upon whose waters freighted vessels crossed. Southward lay the plain of Esdraelon.

The place was as suggestive as beautiful. Especially as he gazed to the south suggestive scenes would stir his memory, for on the plain of Esdraelon the greatest battles of the nation had been fought.

Nor was it isolated. Not far from Nazareth ran several great routes. Over these passed many travelers, pilgrims, caravans, and military expeditions. Clannishness, under these conditions, was scarcely possible. "Nazareth was at the crossing-place of nations, where commerce and military changes gave daily familiarity with all the neighboring races." (Geike, Life of Christ, p. 115.)

If he chose a humble mother and a humble birthplace, he also chose a humble occupation, and a life of hard work. Tradition tells us that he was a maker of yokes and plows, while the Bible calls

him a carpenter. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and Judas and Simon?" the people of Nazareth asked, astonished at his wisdom. (Mark vi. 3.) As he is never called a carpenter by any other people but those of Nazareth, it is presumed that his activities as a mechanic were limited to that place. He did not even do the finer, easier work that falls to the city mechanic. It is probable that there was a shop at or near the house, in which such things were wrought as farmers and villagers ordered, but that most of his work was done at the people's houses. This work would include all sorts of mechanical labor, there being no such subdivision of work as in the larger cities, and it is easy to see how one tradition represents him as making yokes and plows, while another calls him a carpenter.

Because Joseph is never referred to in the gospels it is surmised that he was dead. Tradition says that he died in the Saviour's boyhood, and that Jesus, being the oldest child in the home, assumed the care of the household.

Choosing a boyhood and youth of hard work and of comparative poverty, he did not have what men would call the best educational advantages. He did not sit at Gamaliel's feet, as did his great disciple Paul. He never saw the inside of a college for the purpose of study. Neither was he ever apprenticed to any of the famous rabbis. "How knoweth this

man letters, having never learned." (John vii. 15.) What education he received came through his mother, the parochial school, the synagogue, and what he read and saw for himself. Being a woman of a sweet, modest, unselfish spirit, very devout, and naturally talented, and believing him to be Israel's long-looked-for Messiah, his mother set him the noblest example, and gave him the best instruction she could. Living abidingly in the presence and fellowship of God, she would lay much stress on prayer. Believing the scriptures to be the word of God, she would early teach him their meaning. Many a pleasant evening they spent together, he eager to learn, standing by her side while she was reading to him and telling him bible stories.

The synagogue schools were quite general. Schurer thinks that there were probably such schools in nearly every town in Palestine, where boys from six years and upward could be sent for the study of the scriptures. (Schurer 2, 2, 49.) The emphasis in this study was laid on the law of Moses. According to Josephus, Moses had ordained that boys should learn the most important laws.[1] (Jos. Ant. 4, 8, 12.) The thoroughness with which this was sometimes done is vouched for by this author when

[1] "He commanded us to instruct children in the elements of knowledge [reading and writing], to teach them to walk according to the laws, and to know the deeds of their forefathers. The latter that they might imitate them, the former that growing up with the laws they might not transgress them, nor have the excuse of ignorance." (Apion 2, 26.)

he says that boys could answer queries concerning the law more easily than their name (Apion ii. 19), and that when he was only fourteen years old the leading men of the nation came to him to learn it. (Vita 2.) Philo speaks in a similar vein, and though both he and Josephus lived somewhat later than Jesus, there is little doubt but what was true of the slow-moving Orient in the days of Josephus and Philo was also true a generation earlier.

Jesus' knowledge of the scripture displayed itself early and was thorough. Luke tells us an event that happened when Jesus was twelve years old. In company with his parents and others he had gone to Jerusalem. In some way he was parted from them and lost, and when they found him after a three days' search, he was sitting in the midst of the doctors in the temple, listening to their teaching and astonishing them all by his wisdom. (Luke ii. 47.)

Outside of the parochial school he had so far as we know no systematic instruction. Nor did he have the advantage of a well-stocked library. Books were few, and in a small place like Nazareth there was no library. Periodicals and papers were wholly unknown. Probably the only book he had was the bible. He read this in both the original Hebrew and in its Greek translation. This is brought out by his recorded quotations from it. His grasp on its underlying principles was very profound, far surpassing that of the learned scholars of the schools.

The disquisitions in the synagogue would not assist him much. The synagogues are defined by Philo as houses of instruction, in which the native philosophy was studied and every kind of virtue taught. (Life of Moses 3, 27.) Judging from the Mishna, the philosophy was valueless, and the gospels give us a poor opinion of the virtues. The service was made up of the reading of a passage from the scriptures, on which then a lecture or a sermon was based. (Schurer, 2, 2, 82.) Though the services were hollow, Jesus was wont to attend them. His parents being adherents of the Pharisees, he probably attended a synagogue of the pharisaic order.[1]

Outside of that, his books were nature and men. And he knew both. His language teems with figures drawn from nature. It tells of birds, lilies, grass, grain, sowing, reaping, vine and olive culture, of mustard, tares, leaven, sheep, a shepherd, the growth of seed and different kinds of soil. Certainly eighteen, probably twenty-nine, of the thirty-three recorded parables are drawn from nature or life in the country. And no man needed to tell him of men, for he knew what was in men. (John ii. 24, 25.) The people whom he met in his youth were unsophisticated. No social conventionalities sepa-

[1] There were only two other religious parties with which they could have sympathized, the Sadducees and the Essenes; but that they were not Sadducees is evidenced from their openness to intimations by visions and dreams, at which the Sadducees laughed (Acts xxiii. 8); and that they were not Essene is shown by their bringing a bloody sacrifice at the time of Jesus' presentation, a thing which the Essenes abhorred. (Luke ii. 24.)

rate men from men in the country as is the case in the city. Nature lies barer to the observant eye, and opportunities for studying it are better.

The men he chose to mingle with were generally poor. Though he was the son of David and greater than David, there were no princelings among his associates, neither members of the Sanhedrin nor the Herodian house. Who his friends were in his boyhood we know not, but probably men of the ranks from whom he chose his disciples. He fellowshiped with laborers. Several of the disciples were fishermen—at least six of them—(John xxi. 2), and the others were probably mechanics and peasants. One was a publican. To these he intrusted the work of carrying on his kingdom.

That he was neatly dressed, wore the garments of a gentleman—a seamless coat which was decorated with tassels (Matt. ix. 20)—and mingled in good society, does not deny the poverty of his boyhood and youth, and the general poverty of his companions and followers.

Now, what is the meaning of this? Has it any meaning of a social nature? Remember he had his choice. He could take up his position wherever he wished. He could have chosen a wealthy woman for his mother, the capital for his birthplace, ease for his boyhood and youth, capitalists for his companions, and noblemen for disciples. But he chose the opposite. He chose to pass by the capital, the

palace, and the home of the mighty, and take up his abode with the humble, He the heir of David and the king of the universe. What prompted him to do it? Was it to move our hearts to good will at the sight of his sacrifice? His death at Calvary is far more apt to do that. Was it to show the poor that he was their friend? But this he did by other acts effectively. And why not be rich and show the rich that he was their friend? Do they not need him? Are they not tempted and burdened? But it is said that by being poor he came more nearly being like the majority of men, as the majority of men are poor. Was it, then, not so much to be like the poor, as to be like the majority? If so his being born poor has in itself no lesson, for had the majority of men been rich, he would have been born rich.

It does not seem that the significance of his lowly birth is thus explained. Jesus had in all things the welfare of the inner life in view. It seems far more reasonable to believe that in choosing a humble, pious mother, a modest home in intimate touch with nature, hard work, and what the world calls cramped advantages, he intended to teach that under such conditions the spiritual part of man receives its best development.

Is it not a fact that this is true? Have not nearly all the world's great men thus developed? Which of them developed amid luxury? Wesley, Lincoln, Franklin, Livingstone, Booker Washington,

Michael Angelo, Agassiz, Handel, Bunyan, Booth, whence came they? From the ranks of the toilers. From little, humble cottages, from the country. "It is not from the sons of the millionaire or the noble that the world receives its teachers, its martyrs, its inventors, its poets, or even its men of affairs. We can scarcely read one among the few immortals that were not born to die, or who has rendered exceptional service to our race, who had not the advantage of being cradled, nursed, and reared in the stimulating school of poverty."

And is it not also true that men do not believe this? Men fear hardships for their children. They strive to leave them an ample competency. They buy them books and pictures, seek to send them through college, and if possible, abroad. They endeavor to give them all the advantages that money can buy. Such men's attention should be called to the example of Jesus. "Stop this luxury," it cries; "it injures your children's character. It hurts their manhood and womanhood. It makes them flabby and dependent, like potted plants, which cannot support themselves. Make them win their own spurs, and shift for themselves."

It was President Garfield's doctrine that "The richest heritage a young man can be born to is poverty." To teach that very doctrine, Jesus chose the mother he did, the modest home in the country, hard work, what we call cramped advantages, and poverty.

# THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE POSSESSION OF PROPERTY

"He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" (Luke xvi. 10-12.)

# CHAPTER IX

## THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE POSSESSION OF PROPERTY

On no subject has Jesus been less understood than on that of the possession of property. One is distressed to read how widely his interpreters vary. A German workman who studied Jesus' teachings declares, "Christ was hated and persecuted as the modern socialist, and if he had lived to-day, he would, no doubt, be one of us." (Quoted by Peabody, New World, June 3, p. 324.) Naumann calls him "A man of the people," "The enemy of wealth," "A radical enemy of capital." (The same.) Renan calls Jesus an "Ebionite"; that is, one who taught that only the poor could be saved." (Life of Christ, p. 170; tr. J. H. Allen.) Nitti thinks the same. "Poverty," he says, "was an indispensable condition for gaining admission to the kingdom of heaven." (Nitti, Catholic Socialism, 1895, p. 64.) So did the various mendicant sects of the Middle Ages. Others have called Jesus a communist, as the Fratercelli, the Beghards, the Bonhommes, and the Humiliati. Among these are also the Doukhabors of modern Russia. A sympathetic writer says of them: "Quite naturally, a simple

peasant folk, who take religion seriously, as something important and intimately linked to daily life and conduct, find themselves obliged either to look out for a religion which shall suit them better than that of Christ, or to bring their life more nearly into conformity with his teachings. What, then, are the Doukhabors doing towards carrying out Christ's economic teachings? They disapprove of individualistic property and aim at communism." (The Outlook, Dec. 10, 1898, p. 915.) Others, and these constitute the great bulk of interpreters, claim that Jesus never contemplated an economic revolution, and that the present arrangements, with certain improvements, meet his approval. They believe that Jesus was an individualist, and that with such isms as communism and socialism he had no sympathy.

Such divergent views among able interpreters suggest that the subject is very difficult. This is not so, however. The subject is not difficult. If one will calmly and carefully examine all the scattered sayings that bear upon it, he may get, at no great cost, a very clear idea as to just what Jesus taught.

All the sayings of Jesus which those adduce, who claim that he was opposed to wealth, have only a limited bearing and cannot be generally applied.

The most important one is the conversation of Jesus with the rich young man. "And as he was

going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments—Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and thy mother.' And he said unto him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come, follow me." (Mark x. 17-22; Matt. xix. 16-22; Luke, xviii. 18-22.)

That this was a special demand, made only of this youth, is seen from the amazement of the disciples at what Jesus said in comment on his riches. (Mark x. 24.) Had Jesus been in the habit of asking the abandonment of riches of every believer, the disciples, instead of being amazed at him here, would have bowed their assent, and it is almost certain that the young man would have known of it, as the incident occurred during the latter days of Jesus' ministry. The case is simply this: Jesus loved this young man (Mark x. 21), and hoped to make of him a very useful servant. He knew of the importance which he attached to riches. He trusted in his riches (Mark x. 24), and as with Jesus the service of two

masters is impossible, he bade him part with one. It was heroic treatment; but he in whose eye the loss of the most precious member of the body is preferable to the failure of the best development of the spirit life, who says, If thy hand cause thee to stumble cut it off, if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off, if thine eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out, did not hesitate to ask the same in reference to earthly possessions. (Mark ix. 43-47.)

"It is a situation familiar in modern life. A young man, well born and well bred, winsome and gallant, is withheld from the effective use of his life by the weight of his possessions. If he could only forget that he was rich and give himself to strenuous work he might do gallant service. If some dramatic summons, like that of an actual war, is heard by him, the follies of his luxury and self-indulgence drop away from him, and he becomes the most enduring and daring of soldiers. Meantime, however, here he is, with hardly a fair chance for a useful life, turning play into work, and sinking into a false and foolish estimate of life and happiness. What hope is there for such a young man except through some radical change, curative though cruel, like the surgeon's knife? It was thus that Jesus, loving the young ruler, demanded much of him; and one can imagine the loving pity with which Jesus, when the young man shrank from the only operation which could save him, looked around about and saith unto

his disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." (Professor Francis G. Peabody, The Teachings of Jesus Concerning the Rich, The New World, June, 1900, p. 339.)

Another important passage supposed to show hostility to property is found in the gospel of Luke. "Now there went with him great multitudes; and he turned and said unto them, 'If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down, and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? . . . . So therefore, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.'" (Luke xiv. 25-28, 33.) The people to whom he said this were great multitudes. But what kind of multitudes? They were made up of people who wholly misapprehended the nature of Christ's work. They were going up to Jerusalem with Jesus, expecting that Jesus would be crowned instead of crucified. So, lifting up his voice, Jesus told them that going with him would require the sacrifice of affection, and cost them painful humiliations, and excruciating sufferings. The language is startling, but is just such as was needed

to shake such a crowd out of the belief that going with him would bring them glory.

The other passages urged as teaching opposition to property, he spoke to his apostles. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Luke xii. 32-34.)

It is unquestionably true that Jesus did not allow the apostles to hold property. They had to give up everything. They were to be always with him, that he might send them forth to preach. (Mark iii. 14.) This precluded the pursuit of their ordinary vocations. Entanglements in enterprises would interfere with their mission, so would entanglements in riches.

Being always with him he organized them into a brotherhood. Judas carried the purse. The organization seems to have been of a communistic nature. But that he organized the twelve into a brotherhood, and allowed them no wealth is no proof that he would not allow it to *any* of his followers. In fact, it is not even evidence. The evidence is all the other way. We know that some of his followers had means. There are no passages anywhere which show that they held it against his will. There is not a verse which suggests that, outside of the twelve,

he was in favor of communism. His attitude of indifference to the Essenes, who were communists, suggests that for general purposes, communism did not have his approval.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that it does not follow—if it be granted that Jesus did not approve of communism in his day—that he would never approve of it. Jesus moved in a society in which private property was the rule, and he recognized its legitimacy, but he did nothing more. He did not say to his disciples that private property should forever maintain. In organizing his disciples into a communistic society, he recognized the legitimacy of communism as well.

The fact is simply this: Jesus was not a teacher of economic science. To pronounce in favor of one system of ownership as against another came not within his sphere, and he never did it. Each community must determine for itself what kind of an industrial arrangement will further its interests best, and whatever system will do this, is for that community the one which Jesus desires it to have.

To determine the teachings of Jesus we must not forget the Old Testament. Its teachings are in general the teachings of Jesus, and in many instances they throw much light on Jesus' meaning, where his view is only partially recorded. "Think not," he said, "that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily

I say unto you, till heaven and earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 17-20.)

It is only when laws have ceased to be generally applicable or are perverted from their original intent that Jesus sets them aside. Such was the case with the laws respecting oaths, divorce, and revenge, referred to in his first sermon. (Deut. xxiv. 1-4; Numbers, xxx. 2; Lev. xix. 18; Matt. v. 21-24, 31, 32, 33-37.) They had outlived their usefulness. They had been turned from their purpose. Enacted to restrict these evils, they were used to justify them. Such also was the case with the laws respecting fasting, clean meats, and washings. Their purpose had been overlooked and was lost, and the reason for their existence had consequently ceased. With the exception of these laws, and such as are typical, or have evidently only a local importance, the laws of the scriptures had his cordial approval.

The fundamental principle of the Old Testament's teaching concerning property is that God is the owner.

> "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof;
> The world and they that dwell therein."
> —(Ps. xxiv. 1.)

"I will take no bullock out of thy house,
Nor he-goats out of thy folds.
For every beast of the forest is mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
I know all the fowls of the mountains;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:
For the world is mine, and the fullness thereof."
—(Ps. l. 9-12. See also Job xli. 11; Deut. x. 14.)

This truth is also taught in the allotment of land. God was the owner, and men acknowledged this by giving one-tenth of its produce for the use of worship. This might have been called rent.

This principle of the divine ownership of property was also fundamental with Jesus. With this in mind, the parable of the unjust steward, which without it is so obscure, becomes easily intelligible. "He that is faithful in very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" (Luke xvi. 10-12.)

The goods we have (or the unrighteous mammon) are not our own, but are the goods of another, of God. Of these goods we are the stewards. If we faithfully attend to this stewardship, we are to be intrusted with the true riches, with heavenly treas-

ures—treasures far exceeding in value the best treasures of earth. If we are not faithful we shall obtain no heavenly treasures at all.

Whatever possessions one has, are as many as his ability warrants. "It is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey." (Matt. xxv. 14, 15.) To inequality in the possession of wealth our Saviour had no objection. Inequality in earthly goods rests upon inequality in capacity for managing earthly goods. In the ideal place, in heaven, inequality will maintain. Some are there to sit on the right hand, and some on the left, some are to sit on thrones, some are to have authority over ten cities and some over five. (Luke xix. 18, 19.) These illustrations are figures, but they are figures that teach truths.

Nor did Jesus object to one reasonably enjoying his riches. He was not an ascetic. He was far from what men like St. Francis of Assisi and the followers of St. Anthony of Thebes have represented him to have been. At the wedding feast in Cana he did not scold the happy bridegroom for treating his guests on wine instead of on water, and save the cost of the wine for the use of the Temple or for charity. (John ii. 1-11.) He was often present at feasts, so often that some accused him of

wine bibbing and gluttony. (Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 34.) The somber, austere view of life which deprecates enjoyments, and forbids the use of money for any purpose but that of supplying life's barest necessities is not of Jesus. At Bethany a woman spent on one ointment three hundred denarii. (Mark xiv. 3-9.) And Jesus did not even rebuke that. This was left for Judas to do. Jesus defended the woman. (John xii. 4.) Music, feasts, splendors, flowers, these were not vanities with him to be avoided. These obtain in heaven (Matt. xxii. 1-14; xxv. 1-14), and what is just in heaven cannot be wrong upon the earth. There are higher needs of life than those of food and raiment. "Man cannot live by bread alone." To furnish examples of beauty and provide opportunity for rational enjoyment is as much a duty, where one is able to do it, as to give money to charity.

Respecting this, Professor Peabody writes: "Expenditures of wealth on art, on education, on music, on the opening of the sources of nature to the weary life of cities, on the emancipation of mankind from commercial standards, and the provision of suggestive and symbolic ways of pleasure is not only justified through its elevating and educating effect, but rests also on the explicit authority of the teaching of Jesus Christ. It is not always better to spend for such ends than to give to the poor, but it is equally legitimate." (The New World, June, 1900, p. 344.)

If he was not opposed to a rational enjoyment of wealth, he was ineradicably opposed to selfish and indolent indulgence. With lazy people he had no sympathy. Neither made it any difference if they were the lazy rich or the lazy poor.

Dives was rich. He dressed in purple and he fared sumptuously every day. He was evidently a non-producer. He made no endeavor to increase the talents—the money—intrusted to him, through personal exertion. Daily feasting and dressing in purple attire made labor impossible. For this non-producer Jesus had only the torturing flames of the gehenna fires. (Luke xvi. 23.)

For the bond-servant who was too indolent to labor he has the outer darkness: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxv. 30.) For the master of the household who squandered his master's property by eating and drinking with the drunkards, he had a similar doom. (Matt. xxiv. 48-51.) For the faithful laborers, the faithful stewards (Matt. xxv. 21), the watchful porter (Matt. xxiv. 46), and the scrupulous servant (Luke xii. 37), he had the highest commendations.

But concerning no subject relating to property is there so much misapprehension as concerning giving. It was the teaching of the Old Testament that the Israelites should give one-tenth of all that they produced for worship. "All the tithe of the land, whether of seed of the land or of the fruit of the

tree, is the Lords; it is holy unto the Lord." (Lev. xxvii. 30.) This requirement was complied with by at least a part of the Pharisees, and it had the approval of Jesus. (Matt. xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 42; xviii. 12.) It is objected that the erection of this Old Testament command of tithing into an absolute rule for Christians to obey is un-Christian. Jesus, it is said, loved spontaneity and freedom too much to tolerate specific rules. He dealt with principles, not rules. Grant the objection all the force it has. Grant that Jesus would not approve the erection of the command to tithe into an absolute rule, to the principle upon which the command to tithe rested he was unalterably loyal. God is the owner of all, and we must recognize it by stated contributions. In this way our goods, instead of being religiously injurious to us, become a bond which unite us to God.

Among Christian people, even among the religious leaders, God's ownership is in practice very generally denied. When a minister presents a need to the people, religious or charitable, local or foreign, he does not present it, as a rule, as if his hearers' property was the Lord's. He does not state the need, and then ask the people to confer with God and see if he desires that any of his wealth shall be used for that need. The minister asks for a contribution and coaxes the people, as if they can do what they please with their money, instead of laying down God's claims as contained in the scriptures. He

appeals for aid, while God asks for honor; he asks for contributions, while God demands offerings; he solicits donations, while God demands tribute; he calls the people penurious, if they will not give, while God will likely call them robbers.

There was a period in Israel's history when the same sin was committed. God's ownership was not acknowledged, and men withheld their offerings. The church grew poor and spiritual life declined. Men spoke of God as father, but refused him honor, they called him master, but paid him no reverence. (Mal. i. 6.) And morals grew lax. Every man dealt treacherously against his brother, and against the wife of his youth. (Mal. ii. 14.)

At this stage of affairs a prophet arose and cried, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse, for ye rob me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith sayeth the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the window of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. iii. 8-10.) Might it not be that the awakening to righteousness, for which the church has hoped and prayed so long, will come as soon as God's right to our goods is recognized, and the Christian world shakes itself free from the deadly avarice which paralyzes its progress?

# THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE WORSHIP OF MAMMON

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. vi. 24, 25.)

"And Jesus said unto his disciples, verily I say unto you, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xix. 23.)

# CHAPTER X

## THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE WORSHIP OF MAMMON

Another topic upon which Jesus has said considerable is the worship of mammon. There are a number of sayings in the Sermon on the Mount which from their position in a sermon intended to set forth the nature of the Christian society, derive great importance.

The first, and the one most fundamental, is that money as a power is unholy, and that its influence upon earth has been opposed to God. Jesus called it mammon. We know not the precise meaning of this term "mammon," but it is claimed to have been the name of a Syrian god which the people worshiped when they were desirous of riches. There are those who deny this origin of the term, most likely correctly; but whatever it may be, Jesus used the term mammon as the name of a god. And he put the worship of this god as absolutely opposed to the worship of the true God "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. vi. 24.)

In another part of the gospel where money is referred to, he called it not simply mammon, but unrighteous mammon. (Luke xvi. 11.) So much unrighteousness had centered about its use and so much money had been unrighteously obtained that the very metal seemed to him to be tainted.

The position of Jesus was this: All the aspirations and labors of men had one of two objects: the worship of God, or the worship of wealth. In the case of many men the attempt was made to worship neither the one nor the other exclusively, but to render homage to both, to God perhaps upon the sabbath, and to mammon the rest of the days. This attempt Jesus claimed was absolutely impossible. One must worship the one or the other, Jehovah or mammon; the worship of the two is diametrically opposed.

By this declaration of the absolute opposition of the worship of mammon to the worship of God, Jesus branded mammon worship as thoroughly sinful. No other sins, not even hypocrisy and unbelief, against which he said so much, are put by him in such a direct attitude of opposition to God. Mammon is unholy. One cannot be a Christian and idolize riches.

The second saying regarding it is his advice, or command, not to gather it, but gather heavenly treasures. "Lay not up for yourself treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and

where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there will thy heart be also." (Matt. vi. 19-21.)

The words used are very drastic, startling. As they read they absolutely forbid any kind of accumulation. It was Jesus' manner to be startling. Only thus could he succeed in rousing his somnolent hearers to the dangers before them. Things were with them as they are now with us. To lay up earthly treasures, secure houses, lands, become a capitalist or merchant prince, was the aim or endeavor of most of the people. By their success in this, their life's success was judged. Such as succeeded were fêted and honored (Luke xiv. 12), such as failed were ignored. This worldly spirit had even entered the synagogues. If there came in one who wore fine clothing he was set in a good place, if he wore a shabby garment he was shoved away into a corner. (Jas. ii. 3.)

All this was very abhorrent to Jesus. He set his face against it. His followers should not live that way. Their eyes should be fixed, and their energies bent on spiritual riches, on building up their characters after his own perfect example. And he gives us his word that a society, individual, or nation, which lives for riches, will perish spiritually.

"Where thy treasure is there will thy heart be also." (Matt. vi. 21.) When the heart is on the earth, because its treasure is there, it will grow unspiritual and earthly, and everything within it that is noble and grand will perish.

But are earthly treasures not needed? Must men not eat, drink, be clothed, have homes and comforts? Is not the desire to lay in store for the future a noble one? Is it not an instinct seen even in insects like ants, and can an instinct be sinful?

Food, clothing, homes, and comforts are needed. To provide for them is not only right and proper, but is a duty. The sin comes in when men are not content with enough and become impatient and greedy for more. Since in most societies men are honored as they are wealthy, the temptation to covet more than one needs is always exceedingly strong.

To arm against this Jesus gives three weapons:

First, he bids us temper our desire. This he does by implication in the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, where he teaches his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. vi. 11.) No person hankering after the delicacies of luxury, or after the wealth which makes these possible, can honestly pray that prayer. In other words, he bids us live plain, simple, sober, contented, trustful lives, and thus by limiting our desires make ourselves free from the temptations to mammon worship.

Secondly, he bids us have faith in the Father in heaven. "Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not, therefore, anxious, saying What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not, therefore, anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 25-34; Cp. Luke xii. 22-31.)

Jesus never worried about his food. When he

began his ministry the first temptation which the tempter tried was to get him to worry about his living. He should, so he said, use his supernal powers, so that his need of food should first be met. (Matt. iv. 3.) But Jesus never doubted God's care. His philosophy of life was this: To work at tasks, whatever they were, which were in accordance with God's will, and then trust God for support.

And this he enjoined on his followers. We are to do God's will. God's will and not the obtaining of a livelihood is to be the motive of our work, whatever that work may be. If we so work, the Father will provide. Whatever money comes to us in the course of such work, we must receive and take care of, but we must not do the work for that money. So working we need not be afraid of want through sickness or age. The Father's barns are ever full, and his banks never fail, and he will never send one engaged in his work away empty.

Thirdly, as a weapon against the temptation to worship riches, he bids us put the need of the soul above that of the body. "But seek ye *first* his kingdom and his righteousness." (Matt. vi. 33.) This is before all, and all his teaching having reference to wealth, whether plain affirmations, prohibitions, commands, or recommendations, must be interpreted in the light of their relation to the kingdom, or the spiritual welfare of men.

These, then, are the principles which Jesus laid

down in view of men's danger to become worshipers of mammon. Mammon is unholy. His influence in the world as a power has been against God. Do not gather earthly treasures, rather gather heavenly treasures, as these are more important. To make us strong against the temptation to greed, he bids us temper our desires, learn to live simply, and trust God to provide (which he assures us God will do if we will faithfully do his work) and to always put the interest of the soul above that of everything else.

In other parts of the gospels these principles of the sermon are confirmed and emphasized. The unholy influence of money is set forth in the parable of the sower. "The deceitfulness of riches chokes the word and it becometh unfruitful." (Matt. xiii. 22; Mark iv. 19; Luke viii. 14.) The possession of wealth is here declared to be an obstacle to the truth.

A more striking illustration of its harmful influence is found in the case of the rich young man. In the conversation of Jesus with this youth, the antithesis between the power of wealth and the kingdom of God is direct. It was the young man's wealth that barred his salvation. The incident teaches clearly that the possession of riches, as soon as they are great enough to be really noticeable, are an obstacle in the path that leads to life eternal.

The comments of Jesus on the conduct of this youth are still more striking. "Verily I say unto

you, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Matt. xix. 23, 24.)

It is said that what this saying states was only true in reference to that time. Jesus' death had been determined upon, and wealthy people would not stake their all upon what appeared to every one to be a hopelessly lost cause. But this does not interpret Jesus right. In Jesus' estimation it was hard at any time. He does not deny the possibility. If it was impossible, he could not have had rich people as his disciples, which he certainly had, although in a very small number. Whatever the meaning of the proverb about the camel passing through the eye of a needle might be, it cannot mean to totally bar the rich from entering heaven. "With God all things are possible."

In exactly the same spirit Jesus pictures the fatal ending of a selfish capitalist: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take

thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" And then having told the story, he solemnly adds: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." (Luke xii. 16-20.)

Poor old fool, giving so much thought to caring for earthly possessions, which he imagined were his own, as to neglect laying up treasures in heaven! His fruits, his goods, his barns, and his building enterprises cost him his soul.

Lastly, we see the unholy influence of money as a power, in his charge to the people, when a man desired his assistance in getting his share of an inheritance. "Take heed and keep yourself from all acquisitiveness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.[1]" (Luke xii. 15.) It is as foolish as dangerous. So much is needed for one's life, when one has enough of that he should be satisfied, what he has more brings no blessing.

If men have not understood the teachings of Jesus concerning possessions, that concerning mammon worship has not been believed. Men read the gospels and speak of their simple beauty, especially of the Sermon on the Mount, but either they do not

[1] The Greek word *πλεονεξία*, which signifies a desire for larger holdings, is best translated by the English word acquisitiveness.

believe that Jesus meant what he said, when he spoke of mammon worship, or they consider his guidance in matters of money unsafe. Else why is it that the Christian world has paid so little attention to these teachings? Actually the love of money is more marked in Christian nations than where the Saviour's words are never heard. It almost seems that the more Christian a nation is, the more fanatical a large number of its people are in the worship of mammon.

When Ian Maclaren published his "Impressions on American Life," shortly after he had visited several of our states a few years ago, he said: "The friendly visitor to the United States, who is proud of her achievements and delighted by her brightness, stands aghast at the open and unabashed front of secularity. It seems to him as if not merely coarse and unlettered men, whose souls have never been touched, either by religion or by culture, but that all men, with a few delightful exceptions, bow the knee to this golden calf, and do it homage. Nowhere is there such constant and straightforward talk about money, nowhere is such importance attached to the amount of money which a man has acquired or possesses, nowhere is it taken so absolutely for granted that the object of a man's work is to obtain money, and that if you offer him money enough he will be willing to do any work which is not illegal; that, in short, the motive power with

almost every man is his wages. One is struck, not so much by what is said in plain words (although a dollar is a monotonous refrain in conversation), as by what is implied, and what is implied is this: that if you know the proper sum, any man can be induced to do what you want, even though his health, and his rest, and his family, and his principles, stand in the way." (Outlook, Vol. LXIII. p. 117.)

The only answer I have seen to this is that England is just as bad as America. It probably is, which makes the matter just that much worse. It seems to be the ruling passion in all the leading countries. Had our Saviour said, How hardly shall they that are poor, instead of "How hardly shall they that have riches, enter the kingdom of God," the passion for money throughout the Christian world could not well be stronger. "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evils." (1 Tim. vi. 10.) The oppression of the feeble races, the indifference to fair dealings with them on the part of the so-called civilized, war, the madness of anarchy, the brutality of trusts, drink, gambling, impurity, political corruption, unbelief, domestic infidelity, all grow on its stem. Says Lyman Abbott: "The sin that is nearest the root of our social disorder and unrest to-day is the eminently respectable and deadly sin of covetousness, tainting the life of the family and the church, as well as of the state; the acquisitiveness whose sole

concern is making money, and growing fat on what should be shared with others. Intemperance and licentiousness are more disgusting, but covetousness, which often prompts them for gain, dwarfs them both in the social detriment it works." (Outlook, Vol. LXIII. p. 149.)

It is love of money that is emptying our churches. Men who have accumulated a great deal more money than they will ever need, absent themselves from worship because they are too tired from their endeavors to get still more. Love of money is injuring our homes. Eager for money our women enter the industrial arena with men, home life is more and more going out of vogue, and when it is entered upon, the choice of a husband or wife is frequently dictated as much by money as by affection.

Love of money is destroying faith. It develops the keenest industrial competition. Amid the stress of this, men do and say what cannot bear the light. Thus suspicion is engendered, and faith in man is weakened, the power of faith declines through lack of practice, and unbelief follows. For when faith in man is lost, faith in God is impossible.

Love of money degrades our people. It creates and maintains the dram-shops and the dives, through which men of keen intelligence and great moral possibilities are often reduced to a level as low as the brutes. Men will steal, rob, deceive, oppress, default, sacrifice the welfare of wife, children, and

friends; break any of God's commandments—do anything for money.

Nor is the love of money likely to grow less. Year by year extravagance increases, and men's needs grow larger. The larger they grow, the more will people stand in need of money, and the greater its influence on the hearts of men will become.

The love of money is seen in our holiest places. It is seen in our churches. It is seen in our colleges and universities, and with some of them the money question is paramount. Their presidents are more and more becoming financial secretaries, and are judged by the endowments they raise. The development of the money-making power in the student gets more and more attention, while attempts to mold the character are—at least in some schools—less direct, and are in some entirely disavowed.

"If Jesus Christ is a man
And only a man, I say"

it may not matter much that people ignore what he says of mammon worship. If Jesus Christ is not a man, but God's own son, then the setting asiae of his teaching concerning mammon is serious.

# THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE ACCUMULATION AND USE OF RICHES

"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . . "

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 34-36, 40.)

# CHAPTER XI

## THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE ACCUMULATION AND USE OF RICHES

Another topic upon which Jesus has said a great deal is how money should be accumulated and used.

Jesus was a great friend of the unfortunate and the fallen. It mattered not what one's misfortune was, or how it was occasioned, Jesus gave help to all who sought it. He gave the blind their sight, healed lepers, cured the sick, restored the demoniacs to sanity, and fed the hungry with bread. They found him eating with publicans and scorned him for it, and he replied, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." (Mark ii. 16.) They saw him enter the home of Zaccheus, and they murmured and said, "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." And he answered, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix 7, 11.)

This same friendship for that class Jesus asks of those who become his disciples. "Follow me," he says, "as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.) Espouse my cause, the cause of the unfortunates, seek to recover the lost; endeavor to make the unrespectable respectable,

those not fit to survive fit. Strive to secure for all men the opportunities of welfare—culture, health, knowledge, and character. Though able to march in the front rank of society, take your place in the rear ranks and help the stragglers along.

These facts must be kept in mind in the accumulation and use of our riches. It cannot be that we may sacrifice the interest of the downtrodden in the accumulation of wealth, and further them in our other activities. The bitterness with which Jesus denounced the scribes and the Pharisees for their dishonest accumulations is familiar. Nor can it be that we must pray and speak for one thing, and having money, use it for another thing. If we must use our talents for redeeming men, then our money, which forms a part of our talents, must be used for that purpose. In all our activities the welfare of men must be in our mind, in our financial activities as well as in those which are supposed to be more directly religious.

Concerning the methods for handling our money, our Saviour has said little. It did not come within his sphere, nor is it probable that specific directions as to methods which would have suited his day would suit us. Each age has its own problems and must meet them in the spirit of Christian love.

There are three principles in the Sermon on the Mount that relate to the accumulation and use of money. The first forbids stubborn insistence on

rights; the second acting on the principle that business is business, and that generosity has no place in the business world; and the third enjoins beneficence. The first and second principle will be discussed together, they being so closely related.

The first we find in Matthew's account of the sermon: "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smitest thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also. And if a man would go to law with thee and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 38-42.)

The second saying is found in Luke's account. "And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? Even sinners lend to sinners to receive again as much. But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High; for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." (Luke vi. 34-36.)

Both these sayings have occasioned a vast amount of perplexity. Shall we erect them into rules to be literally obeyed, or shall we look upon them as setting forth great principles? If we do the

former, we involve ourselves in almost hopeless difficulties.

First of all, there is the fact that these sayings are found in the Sermon on the Mount. In that sermon Jesus Christ rebukes the Pharisees for failing to grasp the principles of the scriptures and for erecting statements holding principles into rules which they literally obeyed. If we take these sayings of Jesus as rules, we assume that he gave rules in the midst of a discourse in which he discouraged rules. This is inconceivable. The Doukhabors and others who erect them into rules which they literally obey do with the words of Jesus just what the Pharisees did with the Old Testament, and what Jesus rebuked.

Moreover, as rules, these sayings are wholly impractical, and are absolutely unjust and unchristian? Christ always had, and wills that we shall have, the interests of the needy at heart, and certainly it is not to the interest of a needy man to give him whatever he asks. The poor must often be denied in their own interest. Nor is it to the interest of people's welfare for one to loan to every one whatever is asked for. Should a business man loan money to rivals without requiring interest, or should he give his surplus money to a competitor who asked for it, when there is no prospect whatever that even the principal will be returned to him, his business would greatly suffer; and should several

business men do this, in a strongly Christian community, the interest of the public would suffer.

Could these loans be understood to refer to friendly loans, made to an unfortunate man to tide him over a temporary difficulty, it would occasion no difficulty to take the sayings of Jesus literally. No doubt it is Christian to make such friendly loans, but it is not commanded here. The verb δανείξω (daneizo) makes this plain. This word is always used for business loans, loans on interest, while for friendly loans the verb χίχρημι (kichremi) is employed. (J. H. Thayer. Greek-English Lexicon on the N. T., p. 125.) In addition to this, a literal obedience to these sayings would entail gross injustice. It is unjust for one who has worked hard for his belongings to be compelled to give them to every one who asks for them, when those who ask have probably done nothing.

Each saying holds a great principle: the first one, referring to non-resistance, forbids us being so insistent on our rights; the second, referring to loans upon interest, or business loans, demands generosity in business.

Too firm insistence on property rights has occasioned much evil. It has prompted a great many wars. It has caused much suffering. It always sacrifices the interests of the weak. It has broken up many homes and has alienated parents from children, and children from each other. It has

engendered a vast amount of bitterness, and bitterness is fatal to the growth of the soul, and souls are better than gold. Jesus knew the evil it had done. He saw it all about him, and so he says, "Be not exacting, be yielding, don't insist so on your rights." The language is sharp and startling, but only by such language could he make his thought impressive.

Acting on the principle that business is business, and that all is fair in love and in war, and that business is war, is also a great evil. It has filled our land with bitterness. It begets no end of suspicion. It kills faith. It divides class against class. It crushes the weak. It ruins souls. Modern business methods cannot possibly be reconciled with Christ's requirement. The combinations of capital for the purpose of furthering self-interest, irrespective of the suffering which it entails upon those from whom the markets are taken, or those thrown out of employment; the freezing out of competitors; the pooling of interests, the shutting down of factories or mines because the profits diminish a little, when doing so causes the most acute suffering to helpless women and children, is not generous, and violates the principle embodied in Christ's saying about business loans without interest.

The third principle relating to riches, in the Sermon on the Mount, enjoins beneficence: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men,

to be seen of them; else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven. When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee." (Matt. vi. 1-4.) This, it is true, is no command to give alms, but the endeavor to improve the practice involves the recognition of its importance.

It is interesting to notice how secret Jesus has kept his own almsgiving. The naturalness with which the eleven concluded that Judas had been directed to go and give something to the poor, when he departed from them (John xiii. 29), and the readiness with which they criticized Mary for not giving the money which she spent in anointing Jesus for swelling the poor fund (Matt. xxvi. 9), makes it clear that Jesus gave alms, and had emphasized its importance, yet no instance of it is recorded.

How full his heart was with love for the needy! "When thou makest a dinner or a supper," he says, "call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast bid the poor, the maimed,

the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not the wherewith to recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 12-14.) These people need your inspiration, your sympathy, and the influence of your example and presence. Checks are not sufficient for them. They need the loving look, the touch of the hand that is friendly, and the heart that is sympathetic. It was for this reason that he ate and drank with them so often and was their companion and friend.

The story of the good Samaritan hardly needs any comment. It speaks for itself. To analyze it mars its beauty. "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he, answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?" (Luke x. 25-29), and then comes the story. It is the account of a traveler who fell among thieves, who robbed him and beat him and left him half dead, whom a Samaritan found and cared for, and putting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, to the keeper of which

he gave the money required for the care of the sufferer.

Having told it Jesus said to the lawyer, "Go and do likewise."

One incident in this story should not be overlooked. It has often escaped the interpreter. It is that the Samaritan did not give the money to the sufferer, but to the keeper of the inn. And this suggests the important truth, that help for the needy can often be more wisely bestowed when given indirectly than directly, as when it is given to institutions which are founded for helping them.

In these days, when there are so many of these institutions, it is almost always better. Giving alms, especially to unknown men, is dangerous. Beneficence to the back-door tramps does harm. It should not be practiced, no matter how good it may feel. Money given to schools for the endowment of scholarships to assist enterprising young people; to hospitals to enable the needy to obtain good treatment at low cost; to libraries to bring downtrodden people in touch with high-minded, inspiring authors; to boards for the distribution of bibles, the establishment of churches, or to enable them to send out Christian teachers and missionaries to fire men with a realizing sense of their possibilities because of their divine sonship; does usually much more good than what is given in alms.

And may we not believe that Jesus would have

viewed the investment of capital in business enterprise with the dominating thought of blessing, with great joy? Undoubtedly we may. For he who invests in plants—factories, mines, etc.—giving work to a large number of people, and paying these, not with a view to keeping the largest possible share for self, but with a view to giving the largest wage consistent with the safety of the plant, becomes exceedingly useful, and he meets the demands of Jesus as truly as if he gave largely to charities, or schools, or churches.

Warnings against the selfish use of money are contained in the following stories: There is first the story of the sad death of a rich capitalist, who enlarged his barns to enjoy the fruit of his wide acres, and suddenly died a spiritual pauper. (Luke xi. 16-21.) A second story is that of a rich man who was clothed in purple and fared sumptuously every day, but showed no concern for a pauper who lay festering in sores and hungry at his gate. "And the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." (Luke xvi. 22, 23.)

A third story is that of the rich young man—in some respects the saddest story of them all—who was so anxious to inherit eternal life, but because he was not willing to put the interests of God's kingdom before his wealth, failed to do so. (Matt. xix. 22.)

In order to encourage the unselfish use of wealth, Jesus promised as a reward for it the treasures of heaven (Luke xii. 33), and the friendship of the saved. "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Luke xvi. 9.) Gratitude survives the grave. What a stirring thought it is, that a good man who uses his wealth to help his fellow-men will be welcomed when he enters the spirit world by those whom his benevolence blessed!

But more stirring still is the scene which Jesus portrayed, and which he says shall be seen at the judgment day. (Matt. xxvi. 31-46.) In this picture he shows us how such as have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and the prisoners shall be awarded with heaven, while those who have failed to do this shall be condemned to perdition.

One almost fears to write what this story so plainly teaches. So earnestly have we been taught by catechism and teachers that salvation is of grace, and that works cannot save us, that we have almost come to believe that good works have no merit. But the teaching is so plain, so direct, that we cannot possibly mistake it. Jesus says that he is the friend of those who are his friends, the poor, the hungry, the prisoners, and the sick, and that helping these will do what doctrines, worship, church-going,

and prayer will sometimes fail to do, i. e., insure one an entrance into heaven.

This truth, the importance of helping the needy, of being humane, sympathetic, tender, is another neglected truth. Everybody knows the importance of it, everybody gives assent to it, but so few act accordingly.

The people in Jesus' day knew its importance. They had the magnificent humanitarian laws and teachings of the Old Testament. But they despised the poor. (Jas. ii. 6.) They would occasionally help them, but with money which they had first extorted from them. At least this seems to be taught by the ironical remark of Jesus to the Pharisees to give alms of such things as were within their cups and platters—things that were obtained by extortion and wickedness. (Luke xi. 41.)

The people in Russia know its importance. Has not the large Greek church the beautiful teachings of Jesus? But the earthly existence of the great mass of the people of that tremendous realm is positively painful. They are hungry, filthy, oppressed, enslaved, and ignorant, and the leaders of the church mind it not.

The people of the Middle Ages knew its importance. Those warring knights and feudal lords, who were fired with zeal for the rescue of Christ's sepulcher from the hand of the Saracen infidels, but had no pity for the suffering serfs.

The people of a hundred years or less ago knew its importance. The churchmen who sent children to labor in unhealthy mines, until the knowledge of it roused Christian England's anger and stopped it, and the slave-owner who shrank not from ignoring domestic affection, selling boys and girls from out of the reach of their parent's embrace.

And we know its importance, and while a great deal has been done by us in obedience to Jesus' command, how much there yet remains to be done! What an amount of suffering there still is! What sad tales one reads with every morning paper! And if we will look for it, we might see sights that would make sadder tales still.

The Christian world is still hard on the unfortunate. If one is down he is apt to be trampled lower. Success is honored while hard words are reserved for the failures. The children of the failures are called riffraff, trash, scum, dregs. Poor things! It is well for youth to battle with difficulties, but there are some difficulties that crush. "Have not all a chance in free America?" it is asked. Not all. Such as possess a good environment and a healthy body and brain have; but the others do not. The child of the gutter has no chance. The child of shiftless, drunken, impure parents, living in overcrowded, foul-smelling tenements, has not. He cannot be anything but shiftless and drunken. To rise unaided above a debased environment and a de-

praved hereditary tendency is impossible. To speak of those who have had both of these disadvantages to contend against as dregs and scum, riffraff, and pariahs, is wrong. That is punishing them for what they cannot help.

For these people far more should be done than as yet has been done. There is a stirring passage in an address by the late ex-Mayor Hewitt, of New York, which he made about three years ago in New York before a meeting to raise funds for the East Side work of the Episcopal Church. "The rich," he says, "have not even begun what they ought to do. Men that I almost worship for their generosity and solicitude for those that have less, are not giving in proportion to their wealth the half that was given by their families a generation ago. Have we a right to take this wealth and do nothing to correct the evils created in its production? Can you accept these millions and shut your eyes to the evils which weave themselves about the producers? Can any one be content with such conditions? Good God! can this be the end to which we have been working all these centuries? Is this the result of our industrial development, and must our prosperity as a nation be purchased at such a staggering price? If these terrible tenements, these overcrowded districts, these dark and foul-smelling places, and all the attending miseries must go with industry, then I would to God that every industrial center could be destroyed as

were Sodom and Gomorrah of old, and men be driven back to the land where they can at least have the breezes and the green grass and the sunshine and blue of heaven to look up to." (Outlook, Vol. LXVII. No. 2, p. 89.)

Are these words too strong? I do not know that they are. This is sure, that far more attention will have to be paid to the redemption of these classes than there yet is, before the Christian world can expect to hear from the Judge in the final day: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

# THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATISM OF JESUS

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 17-20.)

# CHAPTER XII

## THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATISM OF JESUS

In certain treatises which deal with the social and economic side of Jesus' teachings, he is spoken of as a radical. This estimate does not accord with what is said of him in the gospels. Instead of calling him a radical it would be far truer to call him a conservative.

To begin with, his conservatism is seen in his attitude to the Old Testament. The student of religion, engaged in the study of this book, finds little in the teachings of Jesus that cannot be found there. All the great doctrines of Christianity, such as that of God, angels, Satan, providence, the judgment, the future life, sin, repentance, forgiveness, faith, prayer, worship, are there; if not clearly stated, are at least germinally present.

The same is true of his teachings referring to economic conditions. All the economic topics upon which Jesus is reported to have spoken are found in the Old Testament; and what is more, those upon which the Old Testament lays the greatest emphasis do also get the most emphasis from Jesus.

This conservatism of Jesus comes out still more in his attitude to the church. The church of that

time had sadly apostatized. The teachings of God contained in the Old Testament had been largely replaced by the teachings of men. The comments upon God's word took the place of the word itself. The leaders of religion were corrupt, and this had cost them the confidence of the people. The synagogues on the sabbath were comparatively empty, and to neglect them was fashionable.

Yet Jesus did not join in this neglect. It was his wont not only to attend them, but also to take part in the services. (Luke iv. 16.) This he did before his public ministry began, and he continued it afterwards. "He went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." (Matt. iv. 23.) To the great feasts in Jerusalem he was a frequent visitor, and as when a boy of twelve, so as a public teacher, the place in which he was most apt to be found was the temple.

A radical person would have left the church in despair, or probably in disgust, and advocated the substitution of something else in her place.

His conservatism is also seen in his attitude to social institutions. The best illustration of this is his attitude to the family. There is in his teaching not a trace of that looseness of view respecting that institution which is to-day so marked among our social and economic writers, especially in Germany. In all his utterances there is only one specific rule, and this one is in the interest of the integrity of the

home. The ease with which the marital relations could be broken received his express disapproval, and the irreverence to parents which was tolerated by the Pharisees got his merited rebuke.

Leaving the family, to look at his relation to the state, we see the same conservatism there. There is no attempt to interfere with established political institutions. There is no evidence that he ever said aught against the authority of the Romans, Herod, or the local rulers. He always obeyed the authorities and required it of his followers. (Matt. xvii. 27; Luke xvii. 14; v. 14.)

That one should maintain a conservative attitude in all his relations except the economic one would be strange. The presumption is against it. Nor is it true. Jesus was as conservative there as everywhere else, as has already been proven. The economic conditions of many of the people were very bad, which grieved him much; the temptation to use violent language concerning the greed of the rich, and the injustice of the rulers was great, but he never used it; nor did he ever advocate any drastic measures looking towards a change.

His conservatism was, however, progressive. There is the kind that retards progress, and there is also that which furthers it. The conservatism of the Pharisees was of the former kind, and this was one of the causes why Christ came in conflict with them.

The Pharisees had no thought of progress.

Their look was backward, not forward. In all matters of consequence they consulted the opinions of the fathers, which were called the traditions of the elders. Learning consisted in knowing what these traditions were. The better one knew them, the greater his fame. No one struck out upon new lines of investigation, whence the sum total of knowledge remained practically the same. Like criminals in a treadmill, they walked continually the same circle, and advanced nothing.

Jesus believed in progress. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now," he said to his disciples, implying that the time would come when they could bear them. (John xvi. 12.)

Taking no account of progress, the Pharisees could not realize the meaning of changed conditions. In this, too, they differed from Jesus. He recognized that institutions and laws might be wise for certain people and be wholly unfit for other people, or for the same people at a different time. This is well illustrated in the first part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of destroying the laws and the prophets. After entering a denial of this, he instances six laws in support of the denial, those concerning anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, resistance, and hatred. These laws were enacted to check evils—that concerning divorce to check

separation, the one concerning oaths to check untruthfulness, while the law called *lex talionis*, requiring an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, was intended to check private revenge. The existence of these laws was a public declaration of the evil of the things against which they were enacted.

Any one believing in moral progress is likely to believe in the coming of a time when such evils shall have ceased to exist, or at any rate when the period for their regulation shall be past. But the Pharisees did not believe in such progress. Years had passed since these laws had been enacted—years of instruction, discipline, and culture—and still they stood on the statute books and they demanded the same obedience to them which was demanded when they were first enacted. If it was once right for a man to put away his wife when he found something unseemly in her, or hated her, it must always be right, they argued. (Deut. xxiv. 1-4.) So with the other laws. Thus they turned laws that were enacted to check an evil into a justification of it. They made of the law a license, just as is done with the laws enacted to check the growth of the liquor industry. When the law declares the business to be evil and dangerous, requiring to be checked, men use it to prove that the business is legal and right.

All this is wrong, said Jesus. The time has come for men to be beyond such laws. Men ought by this time to be so true that oaths shall be unne-

cessary, so pure that divorce regulations shall be superfluous, so gentlemanly that the law requiring an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth might be erased from the statute book. These laws were enacted on account of the hardness of men's hearts. Obedience to them was as much as could be expected from a people just emerging from slavery, but it is not enough for you. "Except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees"—which is such as might have existed a thousand years ago—"ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20.)

Not believing in progress the Pharisees did not, of course, use the past in the interest of progress. They used the past as a compass to determine the location of their position. Jesus used it as a staff wherewith to expedite progress.

It is said that workmen have labored at St. Peter's Cathedral for more than three hundred years. Several generations of laborers have been needed to complete that beautiful structure. Each new generation has added to the work of the generation that preceded it. In this way the temple of truth is constructed, each successive generation adding to the work of the generation before.

But the Pharisees did not do this. They took the bricks, the stones, the mortar, the joists, and the beams which preceding generations had added to the temple, and looked at them, examined them,

turned them over, and studied them again, but they added not a brick.

Neither did the Sadducees. Instead of building on to the structure they actually took its materials away. The Sadducees were destroyers, skeptics; and like the modern skeptics, they regarded the men of the past who have believed as foolish, and congratulated themselves on having been wise enough to discover this.

Nor did the Essenes further truth. They stood aside from humanity, and like impractical monks, as they were, let the temple of truth lie waste.

Jesus added to the temple. He came not to destroy, as he said the scribes and Pharisees did, he came to fulfil; i. e., to complete.

Men had some knowledge of God. They knew him as just, merciful, forgiving, compassionate, and sympathetic; they spoke of him as their rock, their shield, their high tower, their father; but Jesus made all that knowledge more full and real and clear, especially his fatherhood. "Our Father who art in heaven."

Men had some knowledge of the future life. They knew of the judgment day, the separation, the punishments, and the rewards. Jesus enlarged that knowledge. There is no record of any Hebrew before his time who looked forward to death with joy. The future was regarded as a gloomy place, even the abode of the blessed. The saying of the

Grecian Achilles, that he would rather be a shepherd in Greece than a ruler in hades, expressed the opinion of the Hebrews. Jesus removed this gloom. He brought immortality to light. "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . . I go to prepare a place for you."

Men had knowledge of their duties; such as to love, to have faith, to be merciful, patient, just, unselfish, and gentle, but Jesus carried the knowledge of these duties far higher. He did this by word and by example. Nobody spoke so much of the importance of faith, and nobody had ever exhibited so much. No one was ever so urgent in emphasizing the importance and power of love, and no one loved like he. So with the other duties, he carried them to loftier altitudes.

From his contemporaries Jesus stood quite aloof. The attempt to prove that several of his ideas were borrowed from the rabbis must end in failure. The phrases that are now and then culled from them, resembling some of Jesus' parables and sundry petitions of the Lord's prayer, are misleading. They are sayings that were uttered by men who lived from fifty to a hundred years after Jesus. Some lived even later. The ideas which their sayings embody are probably borrowed from Jesus, as the influence of Christianity was early felt upon the Gentile world, and probably as early on the Jewish. The contemporaries of Jesus have left us no literature except a

few detached phrases, presumably because no more was worth preserving.

But with the law-givers and the prophets of the Old Testament Jesus' connection was close. This caused him to be silent upon many topics concerning which he otherwise would have spoken. This is true of economic topics as well as of religious topics. What had been said was enough. His sermons dealt with subjects such as the need of the hour demanded. His method was the practical one. Only topics that needed to be re-emphasized engaged his attention.

How could his connection with the law-givers and prophets be else than close? They were inspired men. His own spirit had instructed them. He himself had enlightened them, and if their words were less full and clear than his own, that was only because they were inferior as men. A perfect revelation requires a perfect vehicle. They were imperfect, while Jesus was perfect. To assume that Jesus was not closely related to the past, or that he broke with the past, was a revolutionist instead of an evolutionist, a radical instead of a conservative, denies the inspiration of the law-givers and the prophets, which the scriptures so emphatically assert.

It is this close relation of Jesus to the past that makes it so difficult to point out what there is new in his teaching. Every now and then we think we have something that is new which later we find to be

more or less clearly set forth in the Old Testament. To attempt to point out the additions which Jesus has made to truth is like endeavoring to show just what each season has added to the growth of a boy. It cannot be held up in a lump with the invitation, "Here, look at it." All the organs of the boy are better developed, are fuller, larger, and stronger from the growth of the season, but no new organs are added, and the additions to him cannot be separated and measured. It is thus with the teaching of Jesus.

The question might be asked, If Jesus is not original. Not in the sense in which an inventor is, producing what has never before been seen. His is an originality like that of a famous artist. In examining the artist's picture, one perhaps does not see an object which he has not seen painted before, and probably equally well. Here is a hand, yonder is a face, beyond that a brook, which another artist, unknown to fame, has painted just as perfectly, but this does not reflect upon the originality of the artist. His glory does not consist in that he painted what no one has painted before, not even in the superiority with which he has painted each separate object in the picture; it consists in the beautiful, harmonious organization of the various parts into one glorious whole. So with Jesus. His glory consists not in the new things which he said, but in the clearness with which he stated old truths. In his wonderful

grasp upon fundamental principles, the evenness of his temper, the judicial balance of his mind, his intense practicalness, his deep sympathy for the needs of the moment, the keenness with which he would ask and answer questions which pierced through all subterfuges to the root of things, and flooded any subject to which they related with new light; above all, in what he was—in his divine personality—through which he was enabled to make truth which was apparently dead vital and forceful, in these, the greatness and originality of Jesus consisted.

It is undoubtedly a great disappointment to some not to find in Jesus' teachings an economic system. But this could not be. It is not God's way. He never does for us what we can do for ourselves. Look at what he does for us through nature. He gives us wheat, but he bakes us no bread; he provides us with wool, but he makes us no garments; he supplies us with trees, but he builds us no houses; he furnishes us with fire and water to make steam, but he does not show us how to build a locomotive; he stores the atmosphere with electrical fluid, but he builds us no dynamos. So he gives us no systems, he gives us truths, but we must make the systems ourselves. It is better so. It is thus that we grow.

Then, too, it would have been impossible for Christ to have given us a system which would be

universally suitable. It is with economic institutions as it is with political ones, what suits one people does not suit another. A representative government is probably very suitable for the people in Massachusetts, but it would not suit the present population of Mindanao. Similarly, such differently advanced people want different economic institutions.

There are three facts touching the subject of this book that need special attention.

The first is, that Jesus was tremendously interested in people's economic conditions. Consequently no man is a true follower of Jesus who is indifferent to the subjects that relate to people's material possessions.

The second fact is, that Jesus sought to better people's material conditions by making the people themselves better. The rationality of that appears to all who observe what is going on in society, and who take time to think Such as labor for the economic betterment of people, and do not aim to make the people themselves better, are just like seamen bailing water out of a sinking ship, leaving the opening through which the water flows in unstopped.

The third fact is, that Jesus planned to make men better through the agency of the church. He worked to that end in connection with the Jewish church as long as its leaders would let him, and when they cast him out, he organized a church of his own.

Believing as we do in the divine wisdom of Jesus, we cannot but believe that the future of society rests with the Christian church. In proportion as that organization is active, in obedience to Jesus, in saving man from sin, will she be efficient in improving people's economic conditions. Periods of great spiritual awakenings have always been followed by social uplifts. Men of great spiritual power who worked through the church leave in their wake the largest number of beneficent activities. The social good done by Luther in alleviating the burdensomeness of poverty, by Calvin, Chalmers, and Wesley, Edwards, Finney, and Beecher, Spurgeon, Brooks, and Moody, cannot be paralleled by a like number of equally able men who worked outside the church.

Sometimes one meets people who are really interested in beneficent activities, and extol Jesus for his goodness and wisdom, but who at the same time, almost in the same breath, slur his church. The utter inconsistency of conduct like that, it is unnecessary to state. If, as they say, the church has apostatized, it has certainly not done so to the extent to which the Jewish church had done it, and which Jesus never neglected. Nor are slurs and neglects in order. Ministers might be rebuked, but then it should be open and to their face, as Jesus rebuked the Pharisees; but the institution should be kept apart from the leaders. Not slurs and neglects,

but tears and prayers and correction and advice are in order, for if the organization which Christ has given us for the world's redemption fails, we must despair of humanity, for there is no other agency for its redemption left, nor has any been promised.

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